



La Paris Musicale!

Music and Art in the City of Lights

October 13–21, 2025

*Tour begins October 14 in Paris

Limited to 25
participants

Dear Vassar Traveler,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to join a musical journey to Paris in October. Paris has been one of the great musical centers of Europe since the Middle Ages, when the monks of Notre Dame perfected the high art of singing in parts, and began to preserve their music in notated form. From the glorious operatic sphere of Lully and Rameau, to the extraordinary orchestral colors of Berlioz, to the innovative harmonies of Debussy and Ravel, Paris has long nurtured the gifts of its musical artists. To be in Paris during the autumn concert season is a rare opportunity to sample its musical riches.

In 2025, Paris celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Palais Garnier, the costliest architectural masterpiece of Napoleon III's Second Empire, and home to the Paris Opéra and Ballet. We are invited to a private visit with the curator of its priceless collection of musical manuscripts, and will enjoy an evening performance of ballet in its splendid theatre, only a brief walk from our hotel in the Rue de la Paix. A more modernist aesthetic prevails at the Cité de la Musique, home of the Philharmonie and the great collections of the Musée de la Musique, founded in 1793 by the new Conservatoire de Paris. We will tour the instrument collection as well as hear two concerts in the hall, featuring two giants of the music world, Daniel Barenboim, in a rare public appearance, and Jordi Savall, a premier early music interpreter. An opera at the Opéra Bastille will be another highlight of our visit.

Walking in Paris and experiencing the vitality of its streets and neighborhoods is one of life's true pleasures, so we will spend some time exploring on foot, and taking the opportunity to view some of the city's artistic treasures, with stops at notable museums such as the Carnavalet, Picasso, and d'Orsay, and a private concert on the organ played for generations by the Couperin family at St. Gervais. A day's excursion into the French countryside will take us to the Château de Chantilly, where we'll view the extraordinary artistic heritage of the Musée Condé and a private concert awaits us at the Royaumont Abbey.

Have I mentioned that one may also dine rather well in Paris? Naturally we will also relish the many delights of French cuisine. I've learned from past experience that great music and art, combined with fine food and wine, and the intelligent, lively conversation of Vassar alums, adds up to a simply terrific travel experience. Please join us this October!

With all best wishes,
Kathryn Libin
Mary Conover Mellon Professor
of Music Vassar College

Vassar Travel Program

*Educational Excursions for
Alums, Families, & Friends*

Tour Highlights

- Prime tickets to four major performances, including an opera, ballet, and two orchestral concerts, the latter featuring music greats Daniel Barenboim and Jordi Savall
- Two private concerts in distinguished venues, exclusive to the group
- Guided tours of historic sites in Paris, including the Musée d'Orsay, the Marais district, and many others with expert private guides
- Private, exclusive viewing of music manuscripts and illustrations in the Opera Garnier Library
- Excursion to the Chateau Chantilly, home of the Musée Condé, the finest collection of art in France outside the Louvre
- Deluxe accommodations at the centrally located, five-star Hotel Westminster in Paris
- Fine dining at some of the city's top brasseries
- Travel by private air-conditioned motorcoach on all excursions
- Pre-concert talks and commentary by Vassar Professor of Music, Kathryn Libin
- Plenty of free time to relax, shop, and sightsee!



Director of the Music Library of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, displays important illustrations of sets and costumes from the long history of the theatre. Lunch is on your own. We return this evening to the Cité de la Musique complex, where one of our distinguished hosts, Lawrence Libin, ex-chief curator of the Musical Instrument collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art guides us around Paris's distinguished collection, before **dinner** across the square and a special performance again in the Philharmonie. The venerable Daniel Barenboim, who has greatly scaled back his performance schedule in recent years, leads the fine Orchestre de Paris in a concert of Beethoven's 6th and 7th Symphonies.

Friday, October 17

The Chateau and the Abbey

The Chateau de Chantilly was entirely rebuilt in the 19th century after the original castle was destroyed during the French Revolution. It houses the art collections of the Princes of Condé, considered the finest in France after that of the Louvre, including masterpieces by Raphael, Van Dyck, Corot, Delacroix, and many others. Adjoining the gardens designed by Le Notre, later the landscaper of Versailles, are the Grand Écuries. After **lunch**, and free time to explore the Stables and Park, we head to the Royaumont Abbey. Within its beautiful 13th century remains of the Cistercian monastery, we enjoy a private chamber concert, exclusively for the group.

Saturday, October 18

The Marais and Ballet

The Marais is one of the most beautiful and characteristic quarters in all of Paris. Our walking tour with Brad begins at the Church of St. Gervais, where organist Aude Heurtenmatte gives us a private recital on the organ used by Louis Couperin and his nephew François, two of the most celebrated composers and musicians of the Baroque era. Then it is on to the fascinating Musée Carnavalet, devoted to the history of Paris, and the Place des Vosges, a beautiful 17th century square. **Lunch** is near the square at a charming bistro. You will have the option of joining Brad for a tour around the Musée Picasso, the artist's legacy to the city of Paris in the Hôtel Salé. Tonight we return to the Palais Garnier for a performance of Leo Delibes's classic ballet, *Giselle*.

Sunday, October 19

Art and Elegance

The magnificent Musée d'Orsay is housed in the former Orsay railway station built for the 1900 Universal Exhibition, and appropriately displays art from 1848 to 1914, a seminal period of French Impressionism, featuring art by Courbet, Degas, Cassatt, and many other artists. After **lunch**, we travel to the Opera Bastille and a matinee performance of Verdi's great opera, both triumphal and intimate, *Aida*, first premiered in Egypt in 1889. Evening free.

Monday, October 13

Flights from the U.S., arrival the following day.

Tuesday, October 14

Bienvenue!

Upon arrival in Paris, check-in is at the Hotel Westminster, our home for the week. Centrally located in the heart of the city, the 5-star Westminster celebrates a 200-year history. In the 19th century, it was the residence of the Duke of Westminster, and maintains a distinctive British flair. Our **welcome dinner** is nearby.

Wednesday, October 15

Revolutions and Mendelssohn

Breakfast daily at the hotel. Our private guide, one of the best in Paris, artfully walks us past sites reflecting both the American and French Revolutions, beginning at the glorious Cathedral of Notre Dame, splendidly restored after its recent conflagration. **Lunch** follows. This evening, we visit Paris's most important concert hall, the Philharmonie, opened in 2015. Designed by Jean Nouvel, the hall was controversially built to straddle less central neighborhoods and attract a more popular audience. The great early music conductor and gambist, Jordi Savall, travels beyond the baroque leading Le Concert des Nations in an all-Mendelssohn program.

Thursday, October 16

Musical Manuscripts & Instruments, Barenboim & Beethoven

In a private visit to the very top floor of the Paris Opéra's iconic beaux arts theatre, the Palais Garnier, Mathias Auclair, the



Monday, October 20

Musées Maisons

This morning you have free time to complete your shopping, stroll another quartier, visit another museum (the Louvre anyone?), or simply relax. You have the option of a tour to one of Paris's most distinctive museums, the wonderful Jacquemart-André, featuring a remarkable private collection of French 18th-century art and Italian Renaissance art in the collectors' beautiful home.

Henry-Louis de la Grange—author of what is perhaps the definitive biography of Gustav Mahler—and Maurice Fleuret left their beautiful home and exceptional music collections to the public. This afternoon, we will tour the house and enjoy a private solo piano recital in its nice salle de concert.

Our gala **Farewell Dinner** is near the hotel.

Tuesday, October 21

Adieu

The tour ends after breakfast and return flights to the U.S.

**Itinerary is subject to change.
Meals in bold are included in the
price of the tour.*

Tour Registration

**Tour Cost: \$7,980 per person, ground only,
double occupancy. Single supplement: \$1,350**

Deposit: \$1,000 per person first come, first serve.

**Balance Deadline: Friday, August 15, 2025. After
that date, call for availability.**

Tour limited to 25 paying participants.

To reserve your place, send registration form with check or credit card information for the deposit amount to:

Vassar Paris Tour

The Grand Tour, PO Box 274

Peterborough, NH 03458

Questions? Contact The Grand Tour: (800) 727-2995 / info@thegrandtour.com, or Kristy Grimes at Vassar: (845) 437-7015 / kgrimes@vassar.edu

The Paris tour is an exclusive presentation by the Vassar Travel Program, and is organized by THE GRAND TOUR Travel Company, Peterborough, New Hampshire.