

# *Bon Voyage!*



SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE PFINGSTEN  
22.-25. MAI 2026



## BON VOYAGE!

(SF, 3 December 2025) Travel itself is the theme chosen by **Cecilia Bartoli** for the Salzburg Whitsun Festival from 22 to 25 May 2026. After the city-themed festivals of recent years, when select places of relevance for music history were the focus of attention, she invites the audience to Salzburg this year under the motto "Bon Voyage".

Starting with Gioacchino Rossini's *Il Viaggio à Reims*, in which a travelling party fails to arrive at its destination due to bizarre complications, the programme illuminates sea travel, expeditions of discovery, but also fateful journeys.

Musical rediscoveries and surprising new perspectives are assembled in this year's programme by **artistic director Cecilia Bartoli**:



"For freelance artists, travel is a way of life: Today, travel is often a commodity, but travelling slowly is a luxury. Your body may move fast, but it recovers at its own pace, and your mind needs even longer to get to grips with fresh surroundings.

During Rossini's lifetime, the speed at which people moved about increased tremendously due to modern achievements such as the railways. Being the astute man that he was, Rossini integrated some of these developments into his works from very early on. In *Il viaggio a Reims*, for instance, he plays with the craze of the upper classes for travelling across Europe.

As a creative artist I have always been driven by an unending curiosity about composers, musicians and what has surrounded them. And I feel very lucky that this urge has not diminished in recent decades: constantly fuelling oneself with new input generates ideas, maintains creativity and drives one forward personally as well as artistically. Stagnation, conversely, leads to fossilization and death. In my mind, a sustainable artistic career – be it long or short – is an adventurous journey full of ups and downs, surprising turns, wonders and dangers. Don't worry about being carried away to unknown shores, but do not hesitate to revisit familiar places either! New experiences make you reassess well-known things from a different, enriched perspective.

I love Rossini's music, but I also admire his personality, his humour, his joie de vivre. Rossini fills me with perpetual excitement and wonder, while his oeuvre still contains plenty of repertory for me to discover. And thus 2026 will see me make my debut as the famous Roman poetess and improviser Corinna in *Il viaggio a Reims*. For me, the farcical storyline of this merry piece contains novel twists, the work's emergence is one of the curiosities of opera history, while its performance history resembles an initially fraught but ultimately successful voyage, culminating now in a frolicsome production at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival. Remembering the enthusiastically applauded collaboration between Barrie Kosky and Gianluca Capuano in 2025, we can expect another joyful and memorable offering from them, once more thrillingly accompanied by Les Musiciens du Prince on period instruments.

*Il viaggio a Reims* is actually perfect for this Festival: it radiates historical significance, and its artistic challenges are on a par with many of Salzburg's legendary past theatrical achievements and (why not...?) dazzling glamour.

The work requires ten fantastic singers with great comic acting ability in the principal roles, something that only a festival of great prestige can adequately assemble. I think you will enjoy yourselves enormously, and I also expect that we on stage will have great fun!

Beyond Rossini, let us be your pilots on all kinds of other fascinating journeys. For example, we welcome back the magnificent dancers of the Hamburg Ballet and join them on an extended ocean cruise, where we discover in *Die kleine Meerjungfrau* (The Little Mermaid) a retelling of Andersen's famous tale that is a combination of virtuosity, musicality, profundity and humour, something I deeply admire about John Neumeier's work.

Claudio Monteverdi set the moving story of Ulysses's arrival home to music in one of his late operas, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, first performed in 1640. We present it in a newly created staged production by Les Musiciens du Prince, under the baton of Gianluca Capuano, in collaboration with the historic Milanese string-puppet company Carlo Colla & Figli, and a group of expert live singers.

Guided by Davide Livermore and his crew, I will take you on a journey through my own life and career in a specially designed staged gala concert on Sunday evening, where we will illustrate the variety of wonderful music and musicians which I have been lucky to encounter on my journey.

Before we close our festival with the second performance of *Il viaggio a Reims* on the evening of Whitsun Monday, we welcome back Christina Pluhar and her ensemble L'Arpeggiata. I am excitedly looking forward to one of their famously original programmes, called *Übers Meer* (Across the Sea). The group will perform music from the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods alongside works from Germany, Spain and Latin America, and will portray further mythical journeys from Classical antiquity. The performance will culminate with Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, set in Jerusalem at the time of the great crusades.

I am delighted to think that you may make a trip to Salzburg to join us on a great voyage of the mind, through centuries of wonderful music and theatre, accompanied by so many artists that I deeply admire.

Bon voyage and see you soon!"

**GIOACHINO ROSSINI****IL VIAGGIO A REIMS****Gianluca Capuano · Barrie Kosky****Cecilia Bartoli · Marina Viotti · Mélissa Petit ·****Tara Erraught · Edgardo Rocha · Dmitry Korchak ·****Ildebrando D'Arcangelo · Florian Sempey ·****Misha Kiria · Peter Kellner · Giovanni Romeo ·****Helena Rasker · Rodolphe Briand · Rafał Pawnuk u. a.****Choeur de l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo****Les Musiciens du Prince — Monaco**

On their way to the coronation of Charles X in Reims, a motley group of travellers gets stranded at a provincial spa hotel. Their trouble is our treat, as we are whisked into an amusing parade of characters caught in a web of flirtation and jealousy, enthusiasm and vanity, lofty ideals and eccentric quirks... Rossini composed *Il viaggio a Reims* in 1825 for the festivities celebrating the same historical coronation that features in the opera. This extravagant occasional work boasts no fewer than ten demanding lead roles and is Rossini's first opera composed for Paris. It was also his last in his native language – a late *opera buffa* that gleefully pokes fun at national stereotypes (the hotel guests hail from all corners of Europe) and self-mockingly parodies the conventions of Italian opera.

**Barrie Kosky comments on the new production:**

„A group of people come together, they're stuck in a hotel - perfect for comedy. We've seen that in Feydeau, we've seen that in Buñuel. When a group of people are stuck somewhere, crazy shit happens. And in a way, that was my starting point for the production. To think, okay, what the opera gives for a director is amazing possibilities, because I can invent another story, because there's hardly any story in the actual opera. And in the case of this production, I always smelt that there has to be something Feydeau-esque about it. Georges Feydeau is one of my favorite playwrights. He's, of course, later than Rossini. He came after Rossini at the end of the 19th century. But Feydeau was really one of the instigators of what developed in the 20th century as slapstick. Feydeau invented this form of farce, this form of incredibly fast entrances and exits, of slapstick, of sexuality and slapstick - because this is always the interesting combination of people in uncompromising positions, of lovers being discovered, of people having rendezvous in hotel rooms. This is all this world that Feydeau developed that you then see in the Marx Brothers and you see in other forms of comedy.

What I hope to achieve, the production is a sort of delirium. A delirium of music, because Rossini's Italian comic music is the music of delirium. Of course, it's got lovely cantabile sections, and there's some beautiful sections, but the overall feeling is a world almost spinning out of control. Like Offenbach. It's exactly like Offenbach. And I think, of course, that's a present for a director like me!”

**DIE KLEINE MEERJUNGFRAU (THE LITTLE MERMAID)****Ballet by John Neumeier****freely adapted from the fairy-tale by Hans Christian Andersen****Lera Auerbach Music****Hamburg Ballet****Wiener Symphoniker**

Longing, unfulfilled love and a sea voyage – in his interpretation of *The Little Mermaid*, John Neumeier weaves together the story and elements drawn from the life of its author, Hans Christian Andersen, who wrote the fairy tale in the 1830s. Neumeier's ballet unfolds during a sea voyage, where the writer recalls the wedding of his childhood friend Edvard to Henriette. A tear slowly runs down his cheek and flows into a sea of memories and dreams. The simple underwater realm of the merfolk stands in stark contrast to the lavish life of the humans on land. The Little Mermaid moves between both worlds, and through her unconditional love for the Prince – even though his heart belongs to the Princess – she endures unending sorrow. The Little Mermaid is left alone, yet through her own strength she ultimately finds redemption. In the end, it's the writer's love for his Little Mermaid that gives her a soul and makes her immortal – just as his creation bestows immortality upon him.

**Opera & Puppet theatre****Claudio Monteverdi: IL RITORNO D'ULISSE IN PATRIA****New Production****Gianluca Capuano Vito Priante · Massimo Altieri · Arianna Vendittelli ·****Alessandro Ravasio · Raffaele Giordani · Francesca Cassinari · Jiayu Jin and others****Compagnia Marionettistica Carlo Colla & Figli****Les Musiciens du Prince — Monaco**

The Phaeacians have set the sleeping Ulysses down on the shores of Ithaca, and his long wanderings are almost over. Monteverdi's opera *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* depicts the last leg of Ulysses's return from Troy: thanks to his divine protector Minerva, he reunites with his son Telemachus, then, disguised as an old beggar, sets out for the royal palace to destroy his wife's power-hungry suitors.

With his genius for musical characterization, Monteverdi conjures up a vivid tapestry of characters and events, which the Milanese puppet company Colla will bring to life on stage with delightful inventiveness.

**Opera Gala: VOYAGE DE MA VIE****A staged journey through the musical cosmos of Cecilia Bartoli****Davide Livermore****Cecilia Bartoli & Friends****Yvan Cassar Conductor**

**Matinee****ÜBERS MEER (ACROSS THE SEA)**

**A musical journey in the footsteps of Ulysses, Arion and Tancredi**

**with works by Monteverdi, Cavalli, Durón, Schürmann, Ghizzolo and others**

**Christina Pluhar Céline Scheen · Luciana Mancini · Vincenzo Capezzuto · Valerio Contaldo and others**

**L'Arpeggiata**

Adventures and fateful journeys often begin with a voyage across the sea. It's a familiar trope from ancient and medieval times that has persisted well into modern times. This musical journey takes us across the breadth of the Mediterranean – long a backdrop for incredible stories, not to mention an object of inspiration for innumerable compositions. Selected musical jewels were composed by Claudio Monteverdi and Giovanni Ghizzolo, the Salamanca-born composer Diego Pisador and Francesco Cavalli, as well as Georg Caspar Schürmann. Traditional Mexican music also finds a place on this journey across the sea.

**Tickets**

Subscriptions are available starting immediately; individual tickets go on sale on 19 January 2026.

[www.salzburgerfestspiele.at](http://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at)

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**Service**

Photographs are available on our website at:

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Gianluca Capuano



Cecilia Bartoli



Barrie Kosky



Marina Viotti



Mélissa Petit



Tara Erraught



Ildebrando D'Arcangelo



Misha Kiria



Helena Rasker



Peter Kellner





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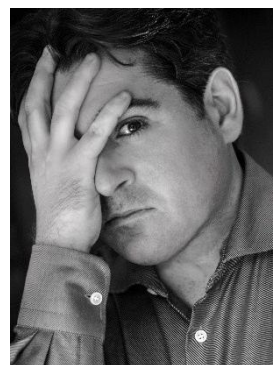
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Vito Priante



John Neumeier



Lera Auerbach



Christina Pluhar



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Davide Livermore

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