

The World's Best Classical Music Venues – Part 2

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on 28 September 2023





Striking the right note – Part 2

Choosing the world's best classical music venues was no easy feat, I have scoured East to West, exploring the concert halls and theatres which make these classical music hotspots unique.

Here is a bucket list of the most important venues in classical music history.



Rome, Italy

Teatro dell'Opera di Roma

Originally opened in 1880 the **Costanzi Theatre**, it has undergone several changes of name as well modifications and improvements.

Patronised by the Papal court, Renaissance composers such as **Josquin des Prez** and **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina**, were instrumental in the development of the Western musical tradition. **Bizet** and **Berlioz** both lived in the city and wrote works inspired by it.

Puccini's Tosca is set entirely in Rome, and later artists such as **Respighi** wrote **Fountains of Rome** and **Pines of Rome**, that eulogised locations in the city.

Other venues include:

The **Auditorium Parco della Musica**.

The **Baths of Caracalla**, an ancient ruin and open air summer venue.

Links:

Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. Verdi - Nabucco - Hebrew Slaves Chorus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBYmhYxEvUM>

Respighi - Fountains of Rome. The Triton Fountain in the Morning Morning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rny4bSHpiw0>

Baths of Caracalla. The Three Tenors. Medley.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2_uxZrx-B0





Auditorium Parco della Musica



Baths of Caracalla





Milan, Italy

Teatro La Scala

Milan is truly the place to be for opera-goers. The **La Scala Opera House**, is a flamboyant theatre enriched in red velvet and crystal chandeliers, hosting a variety of concerts and ballets. Through the years, it has premiered some of the most acclaimed operas of all time, such as **Verdi's Nabucco** in 1842 and **Puccini's Madama Butterfly** in 1904.



Other venues include:

Teatro degli Arcimboldi, and **Teatro Dal Verme**.

Links:

La Scala - 2020 In Lockdown, zoom performance of Verdi's "Simon Boccanegra".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-LxQQ4Os4>

La Scala - Puccini original 1904 Madam Butterfly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgA3izqyBIQ>

La Scala - Puccini original 1904 Madam Butterfly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSJGjDVARqQ>



Teatro degli Arcimboldi



Teatro Dal Verme





Naples, Italy

The Theatre and Orchestra of San Carlo

Named by the Bourbon monarchy, the *Royal Theatre of Saint Charles*, is better known today as **Teatro di San Carlo**. Connected to the Royal Palace, it is the oldest continuously active venue for opera in the world, having opened in 1737, decades before either Milan's La Scala or Venice's La Fenice. A centre for opera composers in the 18th century who helped shape the art form as we know it today – **Scarlatti, Pergolesi and Porpora** being prominent examples. The **Orchestra of San Carlo** continued throughout the 19th century, receiving works composed by **Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi and Rossini** who was also the musical director.

Links:

Naples, Teatro di San Carlo – A Short Introduction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfpTrVdJhA>

Naples, Teatro di San Carlo. Mozart - The Impresario, KV.486: Overture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RohnCtB2BM>

*One performer who did not appear in Naples after 1901 was Naples-born **Enrico Caruso** who, being booed by the audience during a performance of “The Elixir of Love”, vowed never to return.*





New York, USA

Carnegie Hall

Opened in 1891 and arguably New York's finest classical concert venue, **Carnegie Hall** has a unique history rooted in its stunning acoustics, the beauty of its three concert halls, and its location in New York City, where it has played a central role in elevating the city into one of the world's great cultural capitals. It has hosted many famous musicians:

Tchaikovsky, Dvorák, Mahler, and Bartók.

Together with the complex of buildings that make up the **Lincoln Center** including the **Metropolitan Opera**, the **David Geffen Hall**, home of the **New York Philharmonic**, and the **Juilliard School**, New York is well served for music venues.



THE LINCOLN CENTER – Lincoln Square



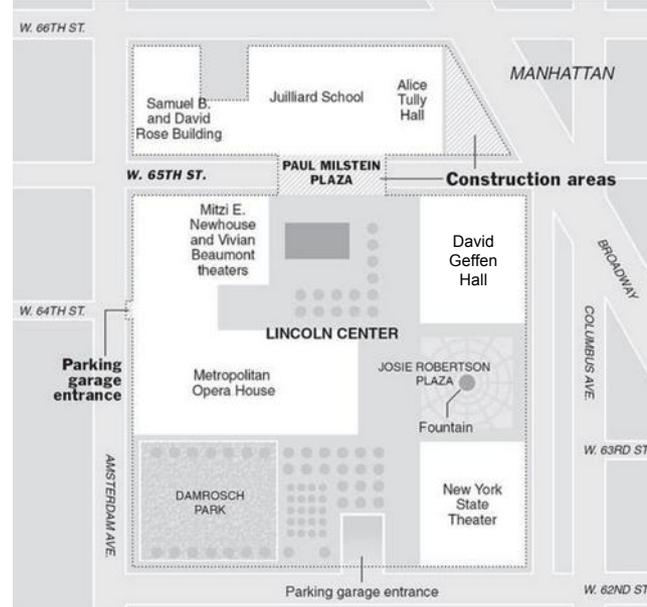
The Metropolitan Opera House



The David Geffen Hall, home of the New York Philharmonic



The New York State Theatre



The Juilliard School



New York, USA

Carnegie Hall Links:

An Animated History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4YFQeNWL80>

Piano concerto "Anniversary" by Yoshiki

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZuSlb8gBSA>

The Lincoln Center Links:

Metropolitan Opera, The Barber of Seville, "Largo al factotum"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ipb9xbXSAY>

David Geffen Hall, upgrade

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgJXBVebYgY>

The Lincoln Center – Danny Kaye, Nutcracker Suite, 1981

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_NXfT90NtA



Prague, Czech Republic

The Estates Theatre 1783

Prague is one of the cultural centres of Europe, and the **Estates Theatre** is the oldest in Prague and one of the most beautiful neoclassical theatres in Europe. In 1787 the premieres of **Mozart's Don Giovanni** and his **“Prague” Symphony No.38 in D major, K504** were held here. In 1791 he wrote and premiered **La clemenza di Tito** for the coronation of Leopold II, king of Bohemia, just 3 months before his death.

Prague has provided boundless inspiration for Czech composers: **Smetana** lived and studied in Prague, and sections of his celebrated work **Má vlast** (My Country) portray aspects of the city. **Dvořák** was born not far from the city and made it a base for his career.

Other venues include:

- the **National Theatre** - 1881
- the **Rudolfinum** - 1885, home to the **Czech Philharmonic Orchestra**,
- the **Prague State Opera** - 1888
- and the **Municipal House** - 1912, home to the **Prague Symphony Orchestra**





The National Theatre



The Prague State Opera



The Rudolfinum, home to the
Czech Philharmonic Orchestra



The Municipal House, home to the
Prague Symphony Orchestra



Prague, Czech Republic

Estates Theatre tour:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TuF0-syYvY>

Estates Theatre. Mozart - Don Giovanni Overture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMd44lWiHd8>

Mozart Symphony No.38 "Prague" Andante:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sN-vGkGcqE>

Plus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLinpqckLGw>

Municipal House. Smetana, Má vlast. Czech Philharmonic:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrLjulz7VSY>



St Petersburg, Russia (aka Leningrad)

Shostakovich Philharmonic Hall (Bolshoi Zal)

Once the imperial capital of Russia, St Petersburg has accumulated a rich history of music-making. The **St. Petersburg Philharmonia** started in 1802 and in 1824 it organised the world premiere of **Beethoven's Missa Solemnis**. There are two concert halls: the *Grand Hall* and the *Small Hall*, where many renowned musicians of the 19th century have performed: **Liszt, Berlioz, Wagner, Mahler, Rubinstein, Schumann, Viardot, and Sarasate**, among others.

Link:

Shostakovich - Festive Overture, Op. 96 (St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Yuri Temirkanov)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0rYodVom5s>

Borodin, Glazunov, Stravinsky and Shostakovich were born here, and the latter's **Seventh Symphony** was premiered here while still under siege by German forces during World War 2. **Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glinka and Balakirev** worked in the city.





Sydney, Australia

Sydney Opera House

When you assess Sydney's classical music credentials, you need not look further than the iconic **Sydney Opera House**. Designed by Danish architect **Jørn Utzon** in 1973, it is home to the **Sydney Orchestra**. The opera house contains eight performance venues, including the **Concert Hall**.

This is for Vaughan ... It is home to the **world's largest mechanical tracker-action, neo-baroque style, pipe organ**. In six divisions, five manuals plus pedals, it is the largest such organ ever built with 131 speaking stops served by 200 ranks of pipes consisting of 10,244 pipes.



Link:

Sydney Opera House Grand Organ. Bach Toccata in F major. Cameron Carpenter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nk7N09n6tfo>



Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall

Tokyo is far removed geographically from some of the more conventional Western cities with centuries of pedigree. But its classical music portfolio is noteworthy.

The **Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall**, also known as '**Takemitsu Memorial**' in honour of the late Japanese composer **Toru Takemitsu**.

The building is designed in a shoebox style, with its pyramid-shaped interior wrapped completely in oak, the result is a stunning acoustic resonance.

The resident **Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra** was founded in 1911 and is recognized as the oldest symphony orchestra in Japan.



Link: Realm of Tranquil Eternity: Inazuma. Overlord of the Thunderstorm
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4bptloZFDE>