MUSIC OF
LA SERENISSIMA

Six nights in the most beautiful city on earth
with London Festival Opera
aboard the MS Michelangelo
22nd to 28th October 2018

Noble Caledonia
The first sight of the Grand Canal from the water affects the emotions like nowhere else. No matter how many times you visit Venice, that first glimpse of every trip is something special.

Venice is one of the most musical cities in the world and when combined with its other wealth of treasures we have something splendid. From Vivaldi to Verdi our musical programme will include great works of early music to the golden age of opera. Where better to listen to such inspiring works than in the places they were written or performed. Local musicians and our own London Festival Opera will perform in churches and magnificent palaces. In the beautiful Palazzo Zen, London Festival Opera will perform by candlelight allowing us to appreciate a spectacle of the past as hundreds of candles illuminate the dazzling architecture and art.

There are of course many splendid hotels in Venice, however being very much a water city we believe that having our own floating hotel will be a great advantage. The MS Michelangelo is a very comfortable vessel and is perfect for our needs. The mooring sites of the vessel in Venice are ideal and only a short walk from many of the city’s main attractions, allowing for after dinner strolls and individual exploration. Using the vessel as our base also allows us to offer such a tour at less than half the cost than if we were based in a good, centrally located hotel. Although the vessel accommodates up to 158 passengers, we are limiting numbers for this tour to 120 due to the size of some of the venues we will be visiting. In addition to the music programme we have arranged a number of excursions both in the city and beyond and, with our informative local guides, we can promise you a very special time in the glorious, most serene republic.

“"There are palaces to see everywhere, and precious churches, and bridges, and pictures by the thousand, and all the criss-cross pattern of antiquity that is picturesque Venice, mocked by the materialists, sentimentalised by the Romantics, but still by any standards an astonishing phenomenon, as fruity as plum pudding, as tart as the brandy that flames about its holly.

Extract from ‘Venice’ by Jan Morris"
London Festival Opera

For many years we have been closely associated with the travelling opera company, ‘London Festival Opera’. Bringing together established opera singers from major British opera companies, London Festival Opera has achieved a considerable reputation for presenting opera and music performances in a wide variety of worldwide venues. We have arranged many successful tours and cruises across Europe and this opportunity to listen to highlights of some of the great operas in the most magical settings of Venice has proven to be amongst the most popular to date.

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Venice, Italy. Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to the MS Michelangelo in Venice. Enjoy Welcome Drinks and Dinner on board this evening.

Day 2 Orientation Sailing, St Mark’s Square, Discovering Casanova & La Pieta’ Church. During our first morning aboard the MS Michelangelo, we have arranged a short cruise, allowing for an overview of the sights and sounds this wonderful city has to offer. Relax with your fellow guests as our vessel meanders and weaves past the many magnificent buildings and places of historical significance this remarkable city displays. Following lunch on board there will be a choice of optional excursions either to St. Mark’s Square where we will visit the famous Doge’s Palace and continue to St. Mark’s Cathedral, or to follow in the footsteps of Casanova, where, by visiting those places he frequented, we will learn much about this fascinating character through hearing of his childhood and understanding how the social and cultural tides of the time had such a large impact on his life. Later this afternoon we will enjoy an exclusive private concert of Vivaldi themed music performed by a local Venetian orchestra in Chiesa della Pieta’, the church where Vivaldi composed the Four Seasons. The Four Seasons were a revolution in musical conception in the 18th century and it will be a thrilling experience to hear the music performed where it was originally composed. On returning to the vessel, we will be treated further by an exclusive onboard performance by London Festival Opera.

Day 3 Hidden Venice, Gondola Ride & Palazzo Zen. After breakfast we embark on a walking tour to discover the hidden corners of Venice. An off-the-beaten-track itinerary through the Arsenale, a colossal shipyard of the Serenissima Republic; the San Giorgio dei Greci church and its secret courtyard; Campo Santa Maria Formosa, one of the city’s largest squares and perhaps the most Venetian place in town; and Marco Polo’s House, before we reach the famous Rialto bridge. Here you will have time to stroll around the market square, admiring the eye-catching contrast of different colours, lights, people, smells and reflections on the glittering Grand Canal. We return to the ship for lunch after which you may either choose to relax and explore independently, or participate in an optional Gondola ride which will immerse you in the magical ambience of Venice’s small canals as you gently glide through spaces that have remained unchanged for centuries. After an early dinner on board we will travel by water taxis to Palazzo Zen and enjoy a concert by London Festival Opera. We have hired this delightful venue for the evening which will be lit by candlelight and acoustically perfect for the performance. During the evening we will enjoy Venetian canapés and refreshments including of course, some Italian Prosecco.
Day 4 Vicenza & Villa Barbaro in Maser. This morning depart by coach for the cosmopolitan city of Vicenza, steeped in a rich history and culture. On a walking tour of this beautiful city you will visit the magnificent Olympic Theatre, built between 1580 and 1585 it is the oldest surviving enclosed theatre in the world. You will have free time here before a scenic drive through the charming Treviso countryside to Maser. Enjoy lunch and wine tasting at the restaurant of the Villa Barbaro, one of Andrea Palladio’s masterpieces and still a working home and farm where wines are produced and exported globally. After lunch you will have free time to discover this beautiful villa and its wonderful Renaissance works before heading back to the MS Michelangelo. This evening enjoy dinner on board and time at leisure to relax or further explore the city.

Day 5 Verona & Venetian Gardens. There will be a choice of optional excursions today. The first option will be to journey to the mysterious city of Verona (mysterious because its early history remains largely unknown and surrounded by many theories) where your knowledgeable, local guide will walk you through the city’s streets. One of the highlights is a visit to Verona’s famous Roman amphitheatre, being one of the largest in Italy after Rome’s Colosseum. Following lunch at a local restaurant, the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure for you to enjoy this Medieval city before returning to the vessel. Alternatively, there will be a morning tour of three Venetian Gardens; Giardino Scarpa, an example of modern style gardening, followed by a visit to Giardino Contarini dal Zaffo, a Renaissance style garden with exquisite lagoon views and finally, heading to Giardino Rizzo Patarol, a delightful garden guarded by a 17th century palace with a large botanical collection arranged in romantic style. Return to the vessel for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Should you not wish to participate in either of these two excursions the day is yours to relax and sightsee independently. Dinner will be available on board for all guests and the evening is yours to enjoy at leisure.

Day 6 Artisans of Venice & Teatro Ridotto. Today enjoy a half day tour by private motor launch visiting two of the most beautiful islands of the lagoon where you explore fascinating aspects of Venice that are quickly disappearing: the handicrafts of the glassblowers and lace makers. You will pass many of the 40 picturesque islands that surround the Venetian Lagoon visiting Murano, renowned since 1291 for its glass manufacture and where you will witness masters of this delicate craft at work during a visit to a leading factory. Continue to Burano, a tiny island dotted with brightly painted houses. Its fame is due to traditional lace making, an art still practiced by many of the local women. After our excursion, we shall return to the vessel for lunch and an afternoon at leisure. After an early Farewell Dinner on board we will make our way by private boat to Palazzo Dandolo and Teatro Ridotto where we will enjoy an exclusive concert and cocktail reception including Italian culinary delights with London Festival Opera.

Day 7 Venice to London. After breakfast disembark and transfer to the airport for your scheduled flight to London.

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**NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY**

**Prices per person**

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**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, six nights aboard the MS Michelangelo on full board and an all inclusive drinks basis (premium brands excluded), shore excursions and exclusive performances as described, performances on board and ashore by London Festival Opera as described, use of audio phones on excursions, drink receptions ashore as featured in itinerary, services of a Cruise Director, Tour Manager, transfers (including private water taxis as described), port taxes, airport taxes, gratuities.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, excursions shown as optional.

**NB:** Excursions and events ashore are subject to change depending on entrance time allocations and venue schedules. All optional excursions are subject to minimum numbers and Gondola ride is subject to fair weather conditions.
MUSIC VENUES
We are delighted to have discovered some truly magnificent venues for our exclusive musical performances.

PALAZZO DANDOLO & TEATRO RIDOTTO
Situated on the Grand Canal, Palazzo Dandolo was originally owned by the noble Dandolo family and was the location of the first public ‘Ridotto’ established in 1638, a place where nobles along with adventurers and travellers gathered to gamble, enjoy the company of courtesans and develop their social and political contacts. Indeed Giacomo Casanova himself considered it the ideal setting for his conquests. The recent renovation has, with a contemporary edge, managed to reawaken the emotions that this ancient palace has inspired since its beginnings. Your evening of music will be accompanied by a sumptuous array of Italian canapés and Prosecco.

CHIESA DELLA PIETA’
This magnificent church was a former convent and orphanage for girls and is an authentic masterpiece of the 18th century by Giorgio Massari. The young orphans that stayed here were encouraged to study music and their most famous teacher was Antonio Vivaldi, hired in 1703 as a violin and viola teacher as well as a choirmaster. Vivaldi’s ‘Four Seasons’ was composed inside the church, which is famous for its perfect acoustics.

PALAZZO ZEN
Situated on a quiet canal, this large palace was built in the late fourteenth century by Carlo Zeno, a hero in the war waged by Chioggia against Genoa. The fine Gothic façade of the palazzo overlooking the canal of San Stin, has been preserved intact and is surmounted by elegant obelisks dating from the seventeenth century. The Palazzo has undergone various alterations over the centuries, the most important and far-reaching of which was the work of the architect Antonio Gasparri who was engaged by Alessandro Zeno, ambassador of the Serenissima at the court of the Sun King at Versailles. Alessandro, probably influenced by the splendours of the French court, decided to add a new wing to the antique palazzo, giving onto the courtyard. The interior decoration was renovated in a sumptuous manner. All the rooms of the palazzo, in fact, are frescoed or decorated with stuccoes by the greatest artists of the period such as Antonio Pellegrini, Jacopo Guarana, Abbondio Sanzio and Amigoni. The Zeno family still reside at the Palazzo.
**MS MICHELANGELO**

For this unique programme, we have chartered the charming MS Michelangelo which was built in 2000 and refurbished in 2011 and is an ideal base for our exploration of Venice. To ensure the ship’s public areas feel spacious and never overcrowded, Noble Caledonia limit passenger numbers aboard the MS Michelangelo to 120 although she can accommodate up to 158.

**Your Cabin/Suite**
The cabins are spread across the Main and Upper Decks, and all are outside facing. All cabins are located above water level affording outside views from the large picture windows, and natural light within the cabins. All cabins are fitted with a bathroom with shower, washbasin and WC and measure approximately 11 square metres. Cabins can be configured as twins or doubles. All cabins have air conditioning and are equipped with hairdryer, satellite TV, radio and safe.

**Your Space**
Spread over three decks, the onboard facilities include a delightful restaurant which accommodates all guests in one sitting. The Lounge is a pleasant space for relaxation with large panoramic windows creating a bright and airy ambience. Also in the Lounge is a large TV and bar area accessible from the ship’s reception area. On the large, spacious Sun Deck you will find comfortable deck furniture where you can relax in the shade or enjoy the pleasant Italian weather. The onboard shop sells postcards, stamps, souvenirs and practical items.

**Your Dining**
Meals are taken in the MS Michelangelo’s bright and airy, single sitting restaurant on the Upper Deck. The restaurant seats all passengers in an open seating arrangement and tables are configured to seat groups of four to eight, with most tables seating six. Breakfast and lunch are served buffet style and feature both hot and cold dishes, whereas dinner is set courses and served to your table. Cuisine is a selection of regional specialties and international dishes.

**Life On Board**
The MS Michelangelo is a comfortable vessel with a friendly and informal atmosphere. The helpful crew will do their utmost to ensure your stay is enjoyable, informative and agreeable throughout. During the day, comfortable and casual attire is appropriate, whereas in the evenings the dress code is smart casual. The all inclusive drinks basis (premium brands excluded) as well as all gratuities, makes for all-round ease and enjoyment.