

Saxony Celebrates the Year of Richard Wagner

2013 is the year that Germany's easternmost state Saxony celebrates composer Richard Wagner's 200th birth anniversary. Since Wagner spent most of his life in Saxony, the state has decided to honor the composer with festivals, museum openings, tours and concerts in a number of cities including Leipzig, Dresden and Graupa.



Wagner's Lohengrin was composed during one of his summer breaks in **Graupa**. Thus the Lohengrin House has been restored to look like it did in 1840. Apart from the exhibition on the opera, visitors can now take a tour around the house as it is equipped with listening points about Wagner's 10 week stay in Graupa.

A brand new permanent exhibition has also been opened in a hunting lodge nearby where visitors can browse through Wagner's life and works across six rooms. A cultural trail has also been devised that pulls together all the sites set up in honor of Wagner including the largest Wagner monument in the world. The site also offers information on the different stages of his life. One can download all the information regarding this site in English at www.visitsaxony.com



In **Dresden**, a special exhibition called 'Richard Wagner in Dresden – Myth and Legend' was set up in the local museum and it recently ended on August 25. The exhibition delved into the composer's long stint with the city and showcased his major influences from childhood to directorship at the royal court. The Semper Opera in Dresden organizes a guided tour on Wagner throughout the year. There is also an ongoing exhibition on the Wagner operas that is renewed every two months. Visitors can go on two walks through the pavilions in the upper vestibules that allow them to have a look at the interiors of Semper's first ever royal court theatre in Dresden. After Wagner worked here for several years, the structure tragically burnt down.



At the Old St. Nicholas School in **Leipzig**, a new permanent exhibition called 'Richard Wagner as a Young Man 1813–1834' was just opened. Almost every night in the year has witnessed a Wagner opera or concert, symposium or exhibition take place in the city. A temporary exhibition at the GRASSI Museum for Musical Instruments is also in the making. The exhibit titled 'Golden Sounds from the Mystical Abyss – Musical Instruments for Richard Wagner' will be opened in January 2014. Apart from this homage to the great composer, Leipzig Tourism has created a website on the life and accomplishments of Wagner. Viewers can go through the contents of the website in either German or English. Visit www.richard-wagner-leipzig.de for more information.

Saxony's comprehensive coverage of Wagner's life is only part of the state's celebration of its rich musical heritage. Leipzig has been home to the likes of Telemann, Bach as well as Schumann. A musical trail in the city allows visitors to follow the footsteps of these legends and walk up to their homes where they lived, worked, were inspired and composed pieces that are here to stay. There are a total number of 23 stops along the trail and they are bound to equip visitors with information they have never had access to before.

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