



Fairytale waltz

A fairy-tale setting and glamorous dress code ensure the fabulous Salzburg Festival is one of this season's essential events. **Susanna Clarke** reports

Salzburg, Austria's fourth-largest city, offers a rare timelessness that is refreshing to both mind and spirit. With its charming baroque centre, dominated by the medieval Hohensalzburg Castle, the city is surrounded by mountains and bisected by the shimmering Salzach river.

There is an added dimension in the summer months when the city becomes the stage for the Salzburg Festival. Now in its 97th season, this world-famous event attracts leading names in opera, drama and music for an exciting

programme of works, from the traditional to the avant-garde.

The festival was founded in the aftermath of World War I by poet, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, film director, Max Reinhardt, and composer, Richard Strauss, as a peace project. Today, it continues to entice people of all nationalities together to devour a feast of cultural riches.

As you might expect from a country that hosts the world's most elegant New Year's event (the ball at the Imperial Palace in Vienna), glamour is high on the agenda. Black tie and long

evening dresses are required for opera opening nights, while dark suits and cocktail dresses are the norm for regular concerts and opera performances. Make the city your catwalk and you can't go wrong.

For shopping opportunities there is the medieval Getreidegasse – the most exclusive street – and also the location of Mozart's birthplace, which is now a museum. The network of tiny alleys and hidden courtyards around the cathedral also offer plenty to explore. You'll find not only a quirky mix

of boutiques, beauty salons and historic sights, but also several of the city's prettiest beer gardens; the perfect way to spend your days during festival season.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg and one of his operas, *La clemenza di Tito*, will launch the festival in 2017. From there the programme is an intriguing blend of the traditional and modern. Verdi's *Aida* (6-25 August) and Handel's *Ariodante* (16-28 August) join Aribert Reimann's *Lear* – a retelling of Shakespeare's *King Lear* – (20-29 August) and all three operas by Monteverdi, to celebrate 450 years since his birth (26-29 July).

The Vienna Philharmonic forms the backbone of the festival and among works they will be performing this year are ▶

Above: Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan guest Orchestra in 2016



its tasteful traditional style and period details, including parquet floors, open fires and antiques. The Sketch bar is the perfect place for a chilled drink before heading to a performance at the National Theatre next door. bristol-salzburg.at

WHERE TO EAT

Ikarus is not your average eatery – it's located in a hangar that functions both as an exhibition space and ultra-modern restaurant with two Michelin stars. Expect startlingly original food from a rotating residency of top chefs. hangar-7.com



WHERE TO STAY

The most prestigious hotel in Salzburg is Hotel Sacher. Presenting a superior five-star experience that blends the best of old and new, its recent renovations offer guests bespoke suites featuring crystal chandeliers and original artwork, then relax in the fitness club with its steam bath, sauna and gym. As an added bonus for festival-goers, the hotel is located opposite the State Theatre. sacher.com

For something upscale yet traditional, look no further than St Peter Stiftskeller. The oldest restaurant in central Europe (founded over 1,000 years ago) and favourite celebrity haunt, it features 12 historic and individually decorated rooms. There's also a delightful courtyard for those balmy summer nights. www.stpeter.at

Mahler's *Symphony No. 9* conducted by Bernard Haitink (28-30 July) and *Symphony No. 7* under Daniel Barenboim (26-27 August). Meanwhile, Sir Simon Rattle will conduct the Berlin Philharmonic in two concerts (27-28 August), while the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra will perform works by Lutoslawski and Tchaikovsky (29 August). Chamber concerts, Lied recitals and special morning performances of Mozart are also part of the mix.

the imaginative staging has been given a fresh look. **Salzburg Festival** 21 July-30 August 2017 salzburgfestival.at

The five-star Hotel Bristol is a captivating alternative. Located by the Mirabell Gardens, the long history of the hotel is evident in

Above: The historical centre of the famous UNESCO heritage city of Salzburg **Left: The view from Bristol Hotel suite 497** **Below: Salzburg's historic city with the baroque Salzburg Cathedral in the foreground**

In common with previous years, Hugo von Hofmannsthal's morality play *Jedermann* (*Everyman*) about the death of a wealthy man will have regular open-air performances in the Cathedral Square, and this year

