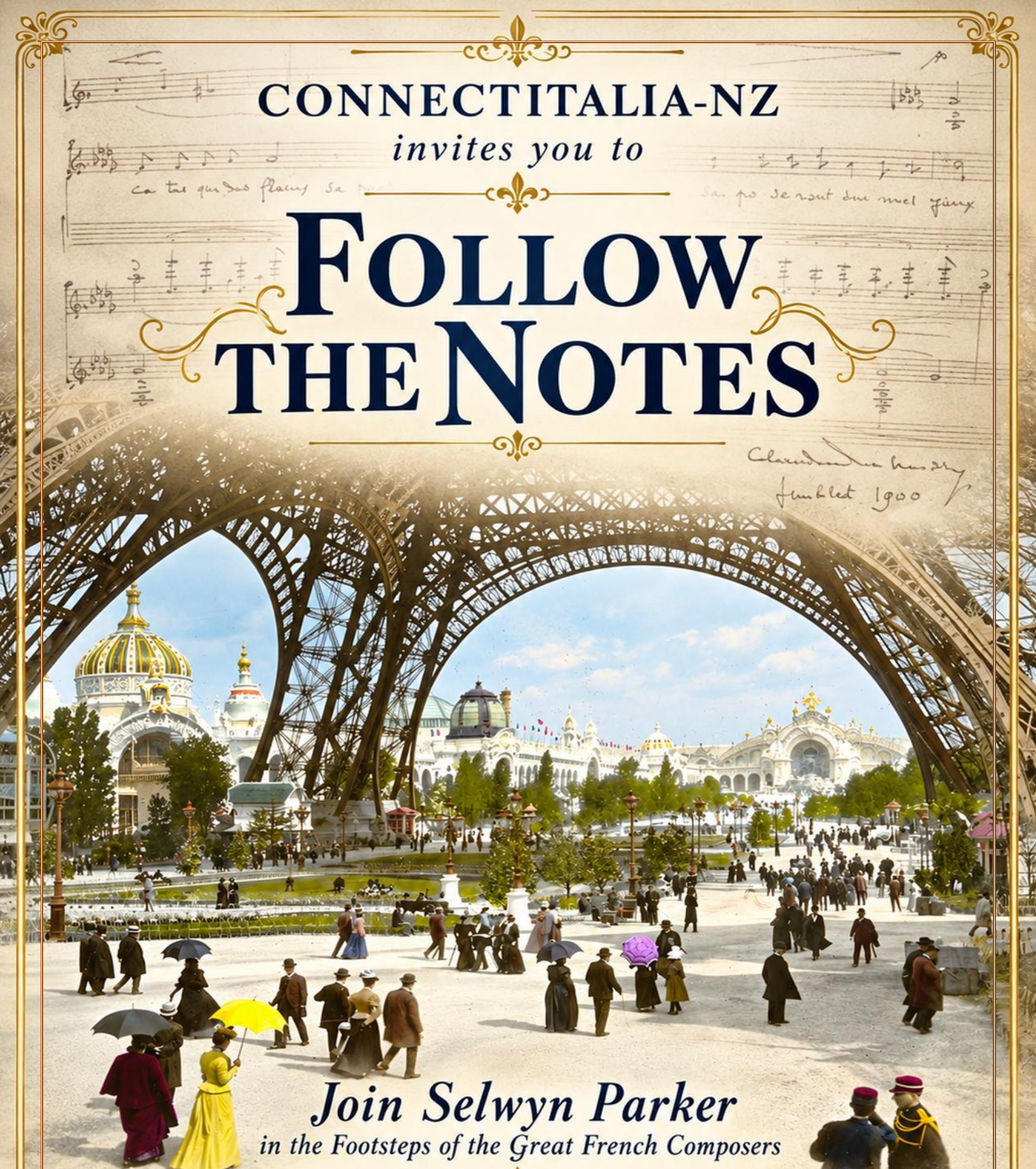
CONNECTITALIA-NZ

invites you to

FOLLOW THE NOTES



Join Selwyn Parker

in the Footsteps of the Great French Composers

Author • Pianist • Journalist • French-Language Specialist

FRANCE • MUSIC • HISTORY • CULTURE

A FRENCH MUSICAL JOURNEY

Follow the Notes





Join **Selwyn Parker** on an inspiring journey through France, following the places, stories and musical landscapes that shaped the lives and works of some of the world's greatest composers.

Connectitalia-NZ proudly presents an intimate cultural journey for travellers who want to experience France through its music, cafés, streets, artists, writers and cultural circles.

The pace is story-led, with time for conversation, walking, museums, performances and independent discovery.

Rather than simply seeing as much as possible, we follow the people who created the music. Composer-focused walks, historic neighbourhoods, residences, musical conversations and selected performances bring the journey to life.

Selwyn Parker is an author and pianist who lived and worked in Paris as a journalist with Agence France-Presse. His books include the award-winning **Chasing the Chimney Sweep**, **Coin of the Kingdom** and **The Great Crash**. He holds an MA in French from the University of Auckland and his piano repertoire includes Debussy, Ravel, Satie, Massenet and Chopin, alongside cabaret and jazz.

Selwyn Parker direct link: https://www.selwynparker.com/

The journey at a glance 14 days 14 nights



Start Date: **Wednesday 17 March 2027**

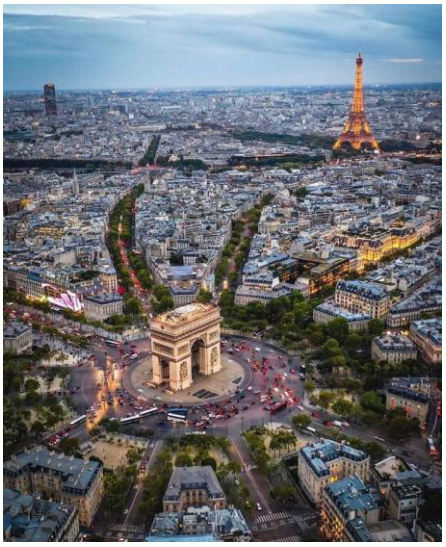
End Date: **Tuesday 30 March 2027**

Tour Price €9,875 pp **(a single supplement may apply)**

The tour begins and ends in Paris. The land package includes accommodation and breakfast; intercity and local transport as described; guided sightseeing; admission to selected sites; and two piano recitals by the tour leader.

Paris sets the scene for the opening chapters of our musical journey, taking in Montmartre, Debussy's Saint-Germain-en-Laye, and Ravel's country home at Montfort-l'Amaury. We then travel by high-speed TGV to Nice, visit Monte Carlo and Aix-en-Provence, and return to Paris.

Flights are not included. You may arrange them through us or make your own travel arrangements.



SETTLING IN AT THE HOTEL

Day 1· Hotel Check-in & Welcome

Today marks the beginning of our shared adventure! Upon arrival in Paris, we will check into our hotel, our home away from home for the next eight nights.

Hotel name, address and check-in details will be provided once the reservation is confirmed.

At 6:00 pm, we will gather for a warm welcome and meet Selwyn Parker, our Tour Escort, who will introduce us to the journey ahead.

At 7:00 pm, we will enjoy a welcome aperitif, sharing conversation and beginning to build the friendships that will make this journey all the more memorable. The remainder of the evening is yours to relax and settle in.

Tomorrow morning after breakfast we will gather before setting off to discover our first composer. On our musical journey we will explore the life, works and inspirations of remarkable people whose contribution to classical music continues to resonate today.



Day 2· Erik Satie





After breakfast at the hotel, we will gather for a short briefing before setting off on our first excursion to discover the life, music and legacy of our first composer **Erik Satie (1866 – 1925).**

Regarded by many musical historians as "a bohemian outsider" Satie immersed himself in the cabaret sub-culture of Montmartre in the 1880's and 1890's. We will see where Satie played piano and harmonium at Le Chat Noir and Auberge du Clou and pass by the increasingly small rooms where he lived to avoid his creditors. The last, at 6 Rue Cortot was described by him as his 'placard' (cupboard).

The cobbled streets of Montmartre will provide the perfect location for us to enjoy Paris in the Spring. Refreshments at one of the historic cafes where Satie spent time with artists and writers in this charming area of Paris will be a must.

Day 3 · Claude Debussy





Our focus today will be on Impressionism in Sound as we explore the environs of **Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918).** Debussy and Satie shared a close 30-year friendship as they sought to develop a fresh and uniquely French sound.

We will visit Debussy's birthplace, now a museum where many of the composer's personal objects and manuscripts are housed. We will also see the Paris Conservatoire, where Debussy enrolled as a student at the age of 10 and later won the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1884.

We will follow in Debussy's footsteps when we stop at the Belle Époque café La Rotonde where he enjoyed mixing with iconic writers and artists of the day. When we listen to Selwyn playing Debussy's music, later today, it will be easy to think of Claude Monet as they both successfully captured the dynamic processes of nature, especially the movement of light and water.

Days 4–5 · Ravel and a free day





We now turn our attention to the music and creative genius of **Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)**, often described as *"the perfectionist"* for his extraordinary attention to detail, precision and craftsmanship. Ravel and Claude Debussy shared a complex and sometimes turbulent relationship, marked by mutual admiration, artistic differences, occasional jealousy and an undercurrent of rivalry. Despite their mutual respect and the tensions that occasionally emerged, both composers profoundly influenced the musical landscape of their time, each developing a distinctive musical language and individual approach to composition.

Today we will travel 20 kilometres outside Paris to the historic village of Montfort-l'Ámaury, where Ravel bought his countryside home Le Belvédère in 1921. His famous work Bolero was composed here, and Ravel remained here until his death in 1937. His home is now a small museum dedicated to him.

We will spend the day in this delightful village, which was founded in the Middle Ages and served as a frequent stopover for French kings before we return to Paris.

Day 5 is a completely free day for you to spend as you wish in this beguiling 'City of Light'.

Day 6 · Saint-Saëns





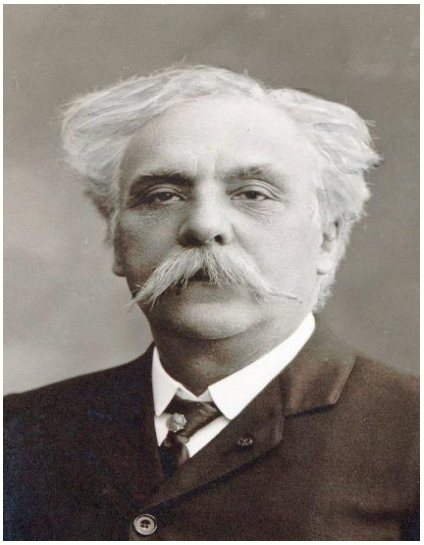
Today, we enter the remarkable musical world of **Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)**, the brilliant musical traditionalist and polymath. A genuine child prodigy, renowned for his extraordinary intellectual abilities, Saint-Saëns reportedly possessed an extraordinary memory, with an almost photographic ability to recall everything he read.

He championed precision, structure and beautiful melody and was greatly revered by Gabriel Fauré and Maurice Ravel. Must-see places for us to visit will be the Eglise Saint-Sulpice and the Eglise de la Madeleine where he was the organist for over 20 years.

We will visit the magnificent Palais Garnier, the Paris Opera House, which staged Saint-Saëns's opera "Samson et Dalila" and hosted exhibitions celebrating his life and musical legacy, either today or tomorrow. We may also make time to stop at the historic Hôtel Bedford, where Saint-Saëns and fellow composer Gabriel Fauré frequently stayed, offering another glimpse into the places associated with their lives in Paris.

Day 7 · Fauré





The spotlight now falls on **Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)**, one of France's finest composers, known for his beautiful melodies and elegant musical style. Sometimes called *"the quiet revolutionary,"* he showed remarkable talent from childhood, entering the École Niedermeyer in Paris at just nine years old.

There, he studied under **Camille Saint-Saëns**, who became a lifelong friend and musical influence. Fauré later worked as an organist at several famous Parisian churches, including Saint-Sulpice and Église de la Madeleine.

His music bridges the Romantic era and the emerging modern styles of the twentieth century. When he was born, Chopin was still composing; by the time he died, jazz had become popular.

This afternoon, we visit the **Musée de la Musique** in Parc de la Villette, home to an impressive collection of musical instruments. We will then enjoy Selwyn performing some of Fauré's beautiful piano works.

Day 8 · Chopin





We will focus today on **Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849)**, the "poet of the piano." Chopin was Polish by birth, but he came to Paris as a 20-year-old and remained here until he died at the age of 39.

Sadly, he was plagued by ill health throughout his short life.

As a virtuoso pianist, he became a celebrated fixture of the elite salon culture in Paris. Praised for making the piano "sing" he gave few public recitals and preferred playing in private candlelit salons for small groups. We will do our best to recreate this environment for Selwyn's recitals!

Today, we will follow in Chopin's footsteps, visiting places associated with his life in Paris, including the Polish Library where personal memorabilia are displayed. Another stop will be the famous Père-Lachaise Cemetery, where Chopin's body rests minus his heart which was smuggled back to Poland in accordance with his final wishes.

Days 9–10 · Nice



As we leave Paris, a new chapter of our French adventure begins, with a change of scenery and a journey towards the sunny Riviera. We will travel by high-speed TGV train to **Nice**, where we will settle into our hotel for 3 nights. The city has an entire neighborhood **(Quartier des Musiciens)** where streets and historic Belle Époque palaces are named after classical master composers including Chopin and Debussy.

The Riviera became a Winter refuge and playground for expat writers and artists in the late 19th century, and it remains so to this day. Nice hosted the first ever jazz festival in 1948 at the Opera de Nice and we will make sure we visit one of its famous jazz bars while we are there.

Day 10 will be a free day for sightseeing, a visit to one or more of the many outstanding art museums or time to soak up the sun on the famous promenade.



Day 11 · Monte Carlo

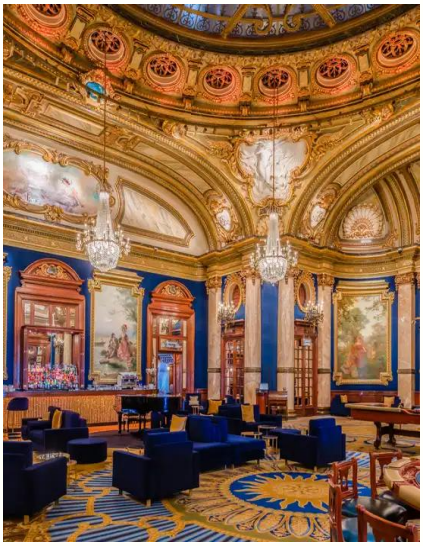


After breakfast, we will travel the short distance to **Monte Carlo** for the day. Depending on the dates which have not yet been announced, you may wish to attend an event at the annual Spring Arts Festival.

In 2026, the festival featured 27 concerts featuring over 260 artists performing more than 80 works by 50 composers. The 2027 festival programme is expected to be just as extensive.

Of course, you may prefer either a flutter or flutter-free visit to the legendary Casino or to spend time at the world-renowned Oceanographic Museum. The choice will be yours.

Transfers back to Nice will be arranged for you.



Day 12 · Aix-en-Provence



This morning our driver will collect us from our hotel and set off for **Aix-en-Provence.** The journey will take us around 2 hours. Aix-en-Provence, often described as “the sunny yellow city” was once part of the Roman Empire. It is famous for its farmers’ markets and even more for being the home of Cézanne, who lived there for the last 20 years of his life.

We are sure many of you will be keen to see a view of Mont. Sainte-Victoire from the Terrain des Peintres but you may also be tempted to attend an event today or tomorrow at the Festival de Pâques (Easter Festival). The programme for 2027 is not available at the time of writing but it will feature both classical music and jazz.

We will stay in Aix-en-Provence tonight and tomorrow night.



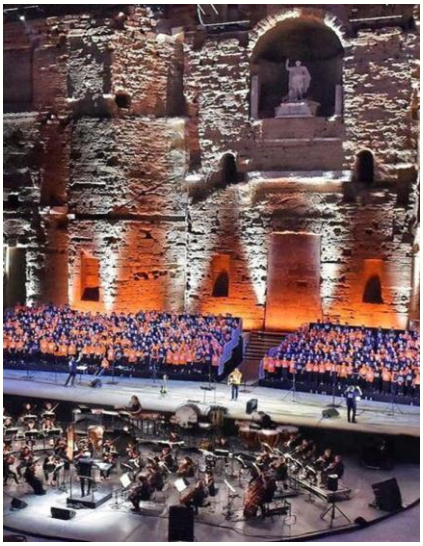
Day 13 · City of a Thousand Fountains



Today you may like to attend something at **Aix's Spring Festival**. Alternatively, you may wish to potter around this elegant city with its Roman past, Baroque architecture, shady boulevards and attractive outdoor cafes. The heart of Aix is the magnificent Cours Mirabeau which divides the city into two halves; the winding medieval alleyways of the Old Town and the Mazarin Quarter.

Some of us will be keen to hunt out authentic Calissons d'Aix, the luxurious sweet treat made from ground almonds, candied melon and orange peel that leaves all imitations for dead.

In the evening, we may be tempted to visit a local jazz bar like Le Petit Duc or La Scène, to round off our time in this very special region of France.



A FINAL EVENING TOGETHER

Day 14 · Return to Paris and end of the tour



Sadly, we must leave Aix today and return to Paris. We will travel by high-speed TGV train on a journey which will take us around 3 hours and pass through a fast-changing landscape from the rugged hills and sun-drenched plains of the south to the rolling farmlands of central France.

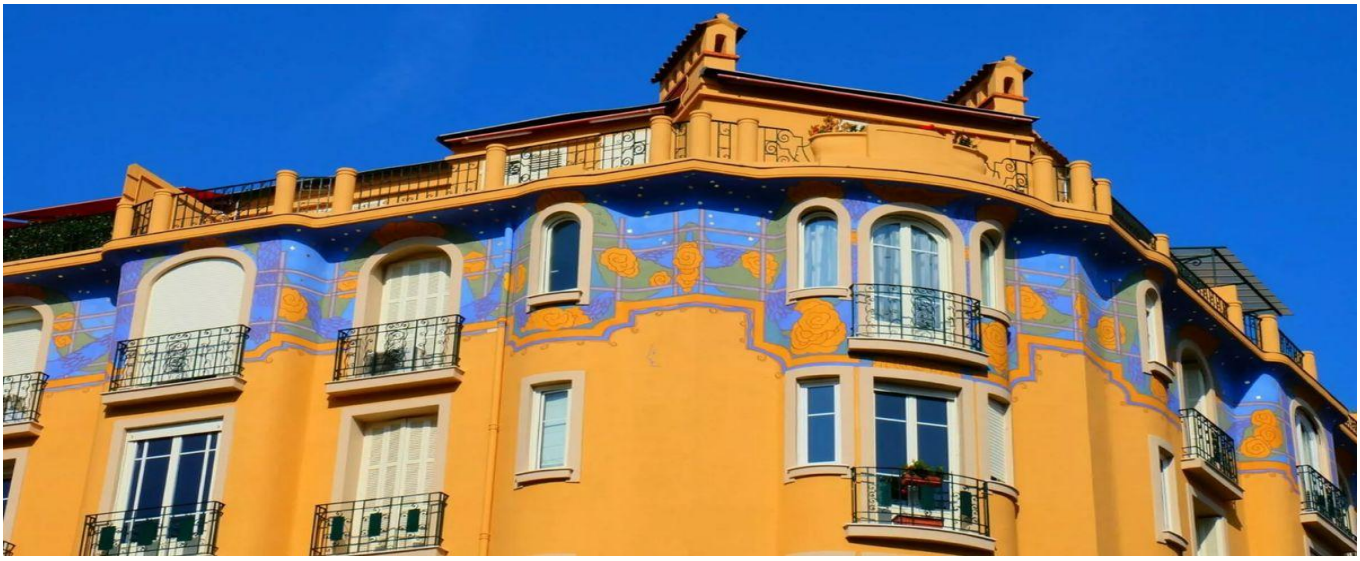
Following our arrival at the Gare de Lyon, we will be transferred to our hotel for the final night of our tour.

Tonight we will spend the evening together at a very special venue where we will soak up the music of the Belle Époque and reflect on what we have learned and shared since we embarked on this journey.



THE TOUR PACKAGE

What is included



Accommodation for 14 nights sharing a double or twin room, including breakfast. A single supplement applies if you want your own room; this will be discussed before confirmation.

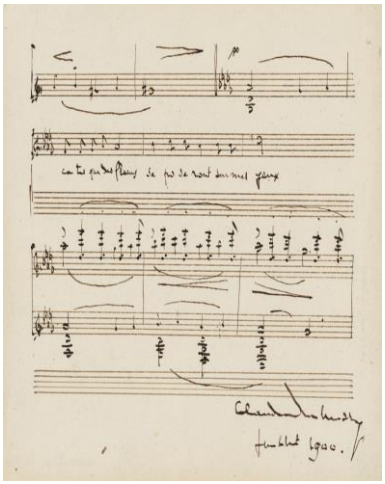
Tour travel costs, including train, coach or minibus transport and associated fuel, tolls and taxes, with a professional English-speaking driver.

Daily sightseeing that forms part of the itinerary.

One group dinner, including beverages, at a specially chosen venue.

Entry fees to the homes and museums visited as part of the tour, with local expert guides where appropriate.

Two piano recitals presented by the tour leader.



ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

Not included



Transport before the tour starts and after it ends.

Meals and beverages other than those specifically included. This applies to food and drinks at cafés, jazz bars and piano bars visited during the tour.

Room-service meals and minibar refreshments.

Telephone and internet charges; porterage; gratuities.

Individual or free-day activities, any festival tickets and optional outings not undertaken as part of the tour.

Comprehensive travel insurance is highly recommended. Connectitalia-NZ Ltd does not arrange travel insurance.



About the organisers

Connectitalia-NZ was founded to build connections between Italy and New Zealand through small-group cultural tours. Its approach is unhurried: time to enjoy what you are seeing, with individual care and attention from two escorts. Tours are land-based and welcome travellers joining from anywhere in the world.



Beniamino Petrosino who is the founder of Connectitalia-NZ moved from Italy to New Zealand in the 1980s. His work has included hospitality, teaching Italian and English, and writing. His novel The Passage of the Frog and the Wild Strawberries of 1942 is set in the Mezzogiorno, the region where he grew up.



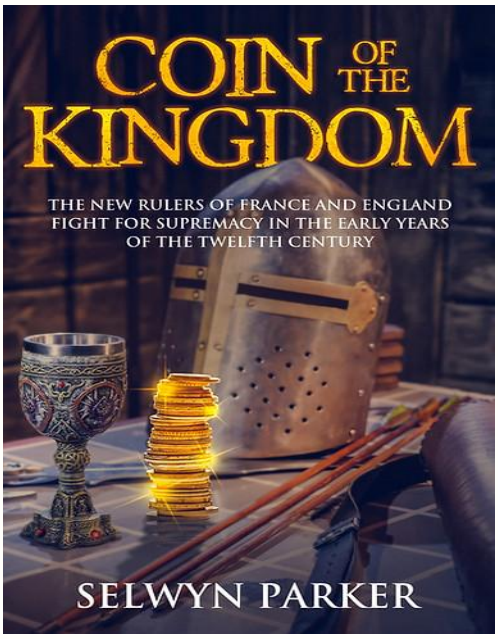
Anne Scragg trained and worked as a lawyer, adjudicator and mediator, later moving into cultural travel. Having travelled widely in Italy, France and New Zealand, she brings a traveller's perspective and a passion for sharing the character of each place.

FOLLOW THE NOTES

In The Footsteps of The Great French Composers

A journey with Selwyn Parker

Author • Pianist • Journalist • French-Language Specialist



https://www.selwynparker.com/

For any queries: info@connectitalia-nz.com
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Other Travel arrangements



Travel broker: Darryl Smith · The Travelsmith

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darryl.smith@nztravelbrokers.co.nz · nztravelbrokers.co.nz/darryl/

With decades of experience in professional travel services, Darryl is a fully accredited and award-winning travel broker based in New Zealand. He can assist clients worldwide, with arrangements handled remotely and support available throughout your journey.

Tour arrangements: This is a **land package**. Flights may be arranged through Darryl or booked independently. Transport before and after the tour ends is not included.

Travel insurance: Connectitalia-NZ Ltd does not arrange travel insurance. **Comprehensive travel insurance is highly recommended.**



For any queries: info@connectitalia-nz.com
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