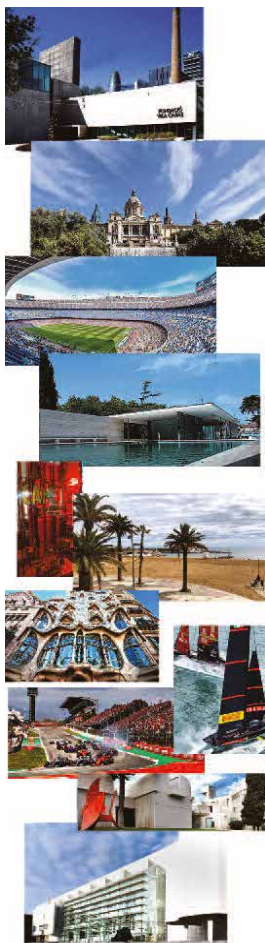


INTERNATIONAL OBJEKT
Barcelona Obertura

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The Spanish city of Barcelona is a tourist magnet pur sang. The beaches, the architecture by Gaudi, the art museums, its varied gastronomy from tapas bars, local Catalan cuisine to Michelin-starred restaurants, the Formula One Spanish Grand prix and in 2024 the America's Cup, they all attract hordes of tourists.

And if that wasn't enough, the city wants to become a mayor player in the world of classical music and opera, to compete with European music centers like Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna or Amsterdam.

For that Barcelona Obertura was launched in 2017. The aim was to promote the city internationally through classical music, based on, a prestigious program of concerts and recitals in three spectacular music venues: the Liceu Opera, el Palau de la Música Catalana and L' Auditori de Barcelona.

The city as a sum of cultural offer (music, museums, modern art, architecture), food, quality of life, and the Mediterranean way of life.

Left: major Barcelona attractions are Can Framis Museum, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Mies van der Rohe Pavilion, a tapas restaurant and the beach, creation by Gaudi, Formula One race, America's Cup, Fundació Joan Miró and Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. Right: the opera house the Liceu Opera at the Ramblas in the center of the city.

Photos: Hans Fonk et.al.



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In the context of the 2023 Barcelona Obertura '7 Deaths of Maria Callas', an opera project by Marina Abramovic with music by Marko Nikodijevic was performed at the Gran Teatre del Liceu. It was an interpretation of the dying scenes from operas by Vincenzo Bellini, Georges Bizet, Gaetano Donizetti, Giacomo Puccini and Giuseppe Verdi as a tribute to the incredible Maria Callas who performed all these opera's and scenes in her time. Photo top left: David Ruano.

Right: the entrance and lobby of the Gran Teatre del Liceu.

Gran Teatre del Liceu

The Gran Teatre del Liceu is located half way down the Rambla in Barcelona. It is dedicated to opera where the largest Wagner Festival after the Bayreuth Festival takes place on a regular basis. Stars like Domingo, Pavarotti, Caballé, Callas and Tebaldi performed here.

The theater has an interesting genesis and a rich history. It goes back to the Sociedad Dramática de Aficionados in 1837, a union of liberal, armed citizen militia that founded a musical conservatory in a former convent of the Trinitarians located on the Rambla. Under the direction of Queen Isabel II it became the 'Liceo Filarmónico Dramático de S.M. la Reina Isabel II' in 1838. The success of the venue led to plans for a new opera house.

The initiators wanted to build a more splendid opera house than would have been possible under royal management. To finance this, they founded a company that accumulated profits from stock trading. The members of the 'Societat de Propietaris', the owners' company, reserved most of the lodges.

The Gran Teatre del Liceu designed by architect Miquel Garriga i Roca was opened in 1847. With 4,000 seats, it was the largest opera house in Europe. Disaster struck, when in 1861 the Liceu was destroyed by fire to be opened a year later. In 1994 the building burned down again. After the fire, the Gran Teatre del Liceu reopened in 1999 with nearly 2,300 seats on 6 levels. Since 1986 there were already plans to expand and modernize the building made by Solà Ignasi de Morales.

The magnificent foyer and the hall of mirrors were reconstructed according to the original spaces. Below the concert hall, an auditorium with a restaurant was built and the stage was equipped with state-of-the-art technology. The curtain has been modernized and was designed by Antoni Miró. The upper floor seats got TV technology installed, since not all seats have a view on the stage. Throughout its history German and Italian operas in particular have prevailed. Verdi is by far the most performed composer. From the end of the 19th century to about 1950, works by Wagner were also regularly performed. Since that time, the range of operas and composers has expanded. In the context of Obertura Barcelona the musical scope has further widened.





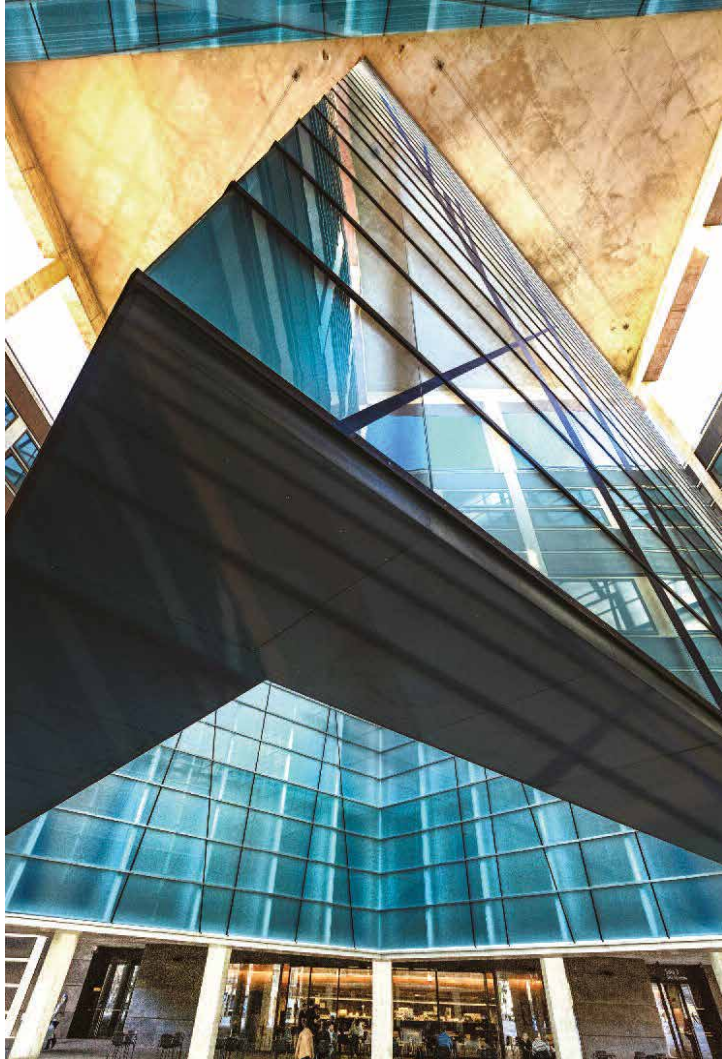
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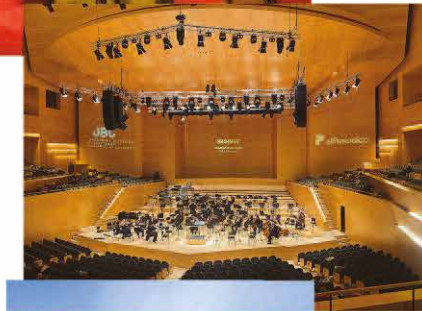
L'Auditori de Barcelona





Left: the central courtyard of L'Auditori decorated with striped paintings by Pablo Palazuelo,

This page: a Delft Blue violin from the Netherlands, 1700-1750 at the Museu de la Música. The wood-lined main auditorium, the Sala Pau Casals and the entrance to the complex, that includes the Museu de la Música, the music school and the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya



L'Auditori, is one of Barcelona's premier music venues. It is located in the Eixample, at the crossing of the three widest and longest avenues in Barcelona Diagonal, Gran Via and Meridiana.

The wood-lined main auditorium, the Sala Pau Casals, can seat 2,340 people. It is the place for a wide variety of musical styles, from symphonic music to rock and the works of singer-songwriters.

Here the Barcelona Festival of Contemporary Music takes place and hosts seasons of symphonic, chamber, early, world, choral and modern music.

It also runs educational programs, provides support for young artists, and brings music to the most disadvantaged members of the community.

L'Auditori has three concert halls, each of them named after a Catalan musician: the Sala Pau Casals, the Sala Oriol Martorell, seating 600, and the Sala Tete Montoliu, seating 400.

The concert hall complex, designed by Rafael Moneo, opened in 1999 and since then has become a focus for Barcelona's musical life in the spheres of education, teaching and research.

The complex also houses the Museu de la Música, the music school, the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya(ESMUC).

L'Auditori is the premises of the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya (OBC). All these spaces are set out around a central courtyard: a monumental cubic lantern made of glass and decorated with striped paintings by Pablo Palazuelo.



Palau de la Música Catalana

The Palau de la Música Catalana was built between 1905 and 1908 by the modernist architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner as a home for the Orfeó Català.

The Catalan choir association 'Orfeó Català', founded in 1891, ordered construction that began in 1905. The Music Palace was inaugurated in 1908. The building is located in Sant Pere district, in the heart of historic Barcelona

It is considered an architectural jewel of Catalan Art Nouveau, the only concert venue in this style to be listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO (4th December 1997). It represents an essential landmark in the cultural and social life of Catalonia. It represents a symbolic emotional heritage for the people who identify themselves with its history.

The modernist building is designed around a central metal structure covered in glass, which exploits natural light to make Domènech i Montaner's masterpiece into a magical music box which brings together all the decorative arts: sculpture, mosaic, stained glass and ironwork.

The facade is adorned with mosaic pillars, each one with a different floral design. Busts of composers as Beethoven, Bach and Wagner represent the musical taste of the time.

Gothic and Moorish architectural elements have been incorporated into the design of the facade. One corner is decorated with a sculpture dedicated to the Catalan folk song ruled by the patron saint of Catalonia, Sant Jordi.

The Concert Auditorium is the piece de résistance and has been the venue for national and international musical event for more than a hundred years.

The stage is dominated by an organ, that was restored in 2004. The auditorium itself is a mystical and paradoxical hall full of characters like the 16 muses surrounding the stage playing different musical instruments from different countries and regions. They symbolize the different styles of music and embody the spirit of the Palau de la Música Catalana. The abundance of glass makes the hall a bright place. Light penetrates the halls through stained glass windows and the central colorful dome symbolizing the sun.

The decorative elements made of ceramics with natural forms are also typical of Modernisme: a number of natural motifs such as flowers, palm trees or fruits adorn the room.

The complex consists further of the Sala d'Assaig de l'Orfeó Català, a place for concerts, lectures, small-scale presentations and the place where the Orfeó Català choirs practice. The Petit Palau is a modern auditorium that opened in 2004 and the Sala Lluís Millet is a meeting place dedicated to Maestro Millet, founder of the Orfeó Català.

As they say in the city: "Barcelona: Come for the music, Stay for the rest"

