

Central European Special Interest Day

5th November 2026 at The Pavilion

With Gavin Plumley



Cultural Revolution in the Heart of Europe

During the 19th century, with many Central European countries still under the control of the Habsburgs, art and culture were often the only ways in which the Empire's constituent crownlands could express their national identities. A century after the end of Habsburg dominance in Central Europe, this study day looks at the arts and culture in the imperial capital of Vienna and the principal metropolises of the Czechs and the Hungarians.



Art and Culture of Vienna 1900

Vienna was the capital of a vast empire and one of the most exciting artistic laboratories in the world. Around 1900, it produced painters such as Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele and Richard Gerstl, architects like Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and the composer Gustav Mahler. Looking at these and others figures in context, the opening session of this study day asks how and why the City of

Dreams became a cultural hotbed around 1900.



The Magic of Prague: the City and the Czech Cultural Revival

As part of the Habsburg Empire, Prague was beloved of kings and princes. During the 19th century, however, the Czechs sought to reclaim the city for their own. Looking at their roots and mythology, the Czech people imagined a new future through art, reshaping movements such as Romanticism and symbolism in

patriotic ways. Looking at painters including Alfons Mucha, Otakar Lebeda and Jakub Schikaneder and composers like Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák, as well as their forward-thinking literary and architectural contemporaries, this talk shows how the Czechs reclaimed both country and capital through cultural means.



A Hungarian Metropolis

Budapest was formed in 1873 by the unification of Buda and Pest, situated on either side of the Danube. The new capital was the focus of resurgent Hungarian nationalism, finding expression in lavish new buildings, the continent's first underground railway system and paintings of specifically Hungarian subjects and locales. Meanwhile, in the countryside, composers like

Bartók and Kodály began collecting the music of their compatriots. Placing these endeavours in a historical framework, the final lecture of this study day explores how Hungarians came to understand their national identity through culture.

Central European Special Interest Day cont.

Our Speaker : Gavin Plumley is a writer and broadcaster. He has appeared on BBC Radios 3 and 4 and he contributes to newspapers, magazines and opera and concert programmes worldwide. Gavin lectures widely about the culture of Central Europe. Recent appearances include 'Klimt and the Kiss' in cinemas worldwide. He has given talks at the Hay and Cheltenham Literature Festivals, Royal Opera House, National Gallery, National Trust, National Theatre, British Museum and the V and A. His first book 'A Home for all Seasons' was published in 2022 and his second 'The Gay Apocalypse: Queer Life and Culture in Vienna 1900' will be released next year. Gavin recently gave a lecture to the Cheltenham Arts Society on 'The Echoing Scream: the birth of Expressionism' which was very well received and we are looking forward to hearing from him again.

Venue : The Pavilion, Hatherly Lane, Cheltenham GL51 6PN

Timetable

10:00 Doors Open
10:30 Lecture 1 – Vienna
11.30 Coffee and Biscuits
1200 Lecture 2 – Prague
13.00 Lunch Break (Please bring your own lunch and drinks)
14.00 Lecture 3 – Hungary
15.00 Q & A and finish

Price: £35 for TASC members and £40 for guests

To book a place, choose which payment method you would like to use. Then click on the appropriate link: **Pay by Card** or **Pay by Bank** to complete the form and make payment.

A. To pay by credit/debit card, [click here](#)

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A **Questions & Answers** document covering the new system is available [here](#)

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