

We like Dostoevsky very much, and he is right about the beauty of the White Nights in St Petersburg, but we would agree more if he had written that they are for the young at heart.

The White Nights begin in May and finish in June, and we think that they are not to be missed.

The White Nights Festival began in 1993 under the artistic directorship of Valery Gergiev, and since then the combination of world-class performances and the beauty of St Petersburg itself has made the festival a major occasion in the cultural calendar. The programme offers both Russian and Western music: operas, ballets, choral and symphonic concerts, chamber music and recitals.

This is a unique opportunity both to experience and to better understand what it was that made pre-revolutionary St Petersburg such a fabled capital. No matter how good or bad an emperor or empress might have been as a ruler, entertainment in the capital was always of the highest order. The Imperial Theatres were not owned by the state, but by the monarch, and paid for directly out of the Romanovs' private funds. Money was almost no object, and the city was a mecca for the best singers, dancers and composers – Chaliapin, Pavlova, Tchaikovsky. It is not an exaggeration to say that on the White Nights tour you can experience something of that same magic.

WE SUGGEST:

Six nights in St Petersburg. Opera and Ballet tickets for five performances at the Festival, **private cruise of St Petersburg by riverboat.**

An escorted tour in June. May also be customised for independent travel.

