

**Lecture given at the ISO Symposium
“How to win new friends for the pipe organ”
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**The organ collection of the
Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart**

The Musikhochschule Stuttgart owns a collection of 11 organs of different style and high quality. As there are a big organ in the concert hall, a symphonic organ in German style, a symphonic organ in French style, a German baroque instrument (Saxon style), an original Italian organ from 1800, an organ in north German baroque style and a French baroque style instrument. In addition there are four other instruments for practising.

- How do teachers and students use these instruments
- The concerts and exams at these instruments
- The guided visits and the publicity
- Critical remarks

Dear organ builders, dear colleagues and dear friends,

Happy birthday to the ISO, I wish you also to win new friends for the organ and I hope to be able to give you some impressions of the organ collection of Stuttgart. 11 organs of high quality – among them three in one room: the French baroque, the Italian and the northern German organ – how do we organize the schedule? It is very simple, we have no teaching schedule. The 9 organ teachers try to use the suitable instrument for the music the student plays, and we even change the room in the middle of the lesson - if possible. This demands a certain flexibility and generosity on the part of the teachers and a good and harmonic atmosphere. You may imagine that it is not always possible to find the optimal organ but it is also very interesting to play Marchand on the Saxonian organ and Bach on the French baroque or even romantic instrument.

The students have access to the organs for 24 hours per day and they organize their practising schedule themselves.

The instruments the students love most are those of the highest quality – not depending on the style!

One Sunday per month, the best students are allowed to perform in the organ series in the concert hall. The publicity is done by our public relations office, and we have regularly between 200 and 400 listeners in the audience. We had one concert with improvisations to short silent movies – it was funny to remark that the audience was a really different one.

Most examinations take place also in the concert hall as public concerts. Organists dispose the concert hall every day between two and (some days) 8 hours – enough to prepare these concerts. If the candidate likes to perform on the other instruments, he can change the organ after each piece – the audience also has to move.

The Hochschule also offers guided visits once a month through the organ collection. This is an often-requested kind of PR. One of the students explains the different styles and plays examples, the duration is about one hour. The students even get paid for it. It is a very good experience for the students to present the organs to a non-expert public.

There are also visits for school classes. Former organ students – now teachers – present the collection to their pupils. This shows us how important is a good formation even for school teachers.

Very important: the president of the Hochschule is an organ fan. Nevertheless, the collection was planned and financed before he was president.

I often hear it said, "You live in an organ paradise at your Hochschule", and it is true that the conditions are very very good, and we are very glad about it. But we have to continue asking ourselves about the aims of our teaching, our way of playing, of performing music.

These conditions are the best to learn how to play Frescobaldi, Buxtehude, Bach, Couperin, Mendelssohn, Reger, Vierne, Messiaen and so on, may be a rather conservative programme, turned backwards like most classical educations as piano, violin and so on. We have also to create inspiring situations, open for fantasy, for a creative spirit. Young people shall have visions for future music, shall improvise outside of stylistic limits.

We shall not think that all aims are reached with stylistic specification and it is our common task to plan and build instruments of extraordinary quality with even new fascinating sounds on the base of the experience of each one of us. I would like to say (certainly simplified): risk some new stops!