

**Lecture given at the ISO Symposium  
“How to win new friends for the pipe organ”  
Amsterdam 2007**

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***European Masters Education  
> OrganExpert <  
for Organ Consultants***

**The definition**

“OrganExpert” is the world’s only degree course designed for those who will go on to provide consultancy, to ecclesiastical or national institutions as well as private individuals, on organ projects (designing new organs and copies of historic instruments, supervising the maintenance and restoration of existing instruments). Its development has been funded by the European Union (European Commission) and is presided over by the Vatican (Council of Culture).

The course has been developed in a network of European colleges and universities, and will lead to the award of the internationally-accredited postgraduate Master of Arts degree.

**The way**

The initiative for this EU project came from the Musikhochschule Trossingen and organ professor, Christoph Bossert (now in a similar post at the Musikhochschule Würzburg and president of the network OrganExpert). After the political events of 1989, he took the opportunity to visit historic organs in Eastern Europe, when more than 10,000 of these became accessible. Since 1993, students in the organ classes have made study trips to representative instruments of the countries in Eastern Europe. These organs are authentic in sound and technique, not constructed in a mixed style.

It was realized that the organ could serve as a symbol of the European identity. In almost all European countries one can find an organ in the church of each village! The Congress in Varaždin (Warasdin), Croatia, in September 2000 was the first to focus on the organ situation in these Eastern countries and discovered many issues to do with the instruments and the possibilities for development. It was a chance to raise public consciousness to help prevent organists and organ-builders making the same mistakes with historic instruments that were made in Western Europe after the Second World War.

A follow-up conference took the form of a European Organ Symposium, held in Göteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden, in June 2001. It set the organ in a general European context and provided a comprehensive view of the problems surrounding European organ heritage and how these could be dealt with by cooperating on a European country level.

This process received a new impulse when funding for the project OrganExpert was agreed by the European Union and received the patronage of the Vatican. In August 2005, a third of the applications were granted by the European Commission; and in October 2005 it was possible to start the development of an international course of studies in the context of the Socrates Erasmus programme.

During the two years October 2005 to September 2007, the study programme was devised. Then the next stage of preparation began, when the first candidates passed the admission test in Brussels during the German EU-presidency in June 2007. Four of these young organists will start as students to test the curriculum in the winter semester, beginning in October of this year.

### **The aims**

The aim of the “OrganExpert” study programme is to offer a qualification as an organ expert to Masters degree level, and possibly also leading – after further study and research – to a doctorate. The programme will cover the entire spectrum of this musical instrument, including the protection of and innovation within this important European cultural heritage.

The study programme will be multidisciplinary, bringing together the arts, science and handcraft, and implementing the standards for the organ conservation and restoration established in 1964 by the International Charter of Venice and by other declarations, and enable the results of the teaching and the research to be put at the disposal of companies.

The “OrganExpert” study programme would be of particular interest to three professional categories, and practitioners could apply for a place: organists, musicologists and organ builders. As this is a Masters level qualification, the main prerequisite is that the applicant should already hold a university degree (Bachelor degree or Master, in accordance with the Bologna Reform); this criterion might be difficult but it will be possible for organ builders to participate as guest students. So and in other ways organists and organ builders can have a permanent dialogue which is very important now and in future.

### **The partners and the locations**

The expertise is provided by the partner universities as well as the associated partners during the developmental phase. After this time, more partners will join in the network. In principle the network is open for other institutions interested in the education programme and which could contribute their know-how to the programme.

### **The study programme**

The lectures will be delivered at various different places in Europe: two semesters will run in Trossingen, one in Rome (Roma) and one in Göteborg (Gothenburg), each supplemented by excursions and special courses. Two practical courses must be undertaken between the lecture series. The innovative study concept requires a high degree of adaptability in the students and the lecturers.

### **The subjects and the modules of the first semester**

For the modules – in the standard of the Bologna-model European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) – the subjects will be given the best combination of the art (organ playing), academic research (organology) and handcraft (organ building).

### **The faculty**

An international college of experts will give the lectures, in German and English.

### **The publications**

The institutions of the network OrganExpert are publishing the Library of OrganExpert with special study-books: thesis (Master), dissertations (DPhil), documentation of organs and organscapes, scores (organ and choir music), productions on CD, audio-books on CD (descriptions of organs), handbook for the practical work of organ experts etc.

## **The institute of organ and church music**

The Musikhochschule Trossingen established an “institute of organ and church music“ in Rottweil in southern Germany, in a building founded in 1722 as a Jesuit high-school. In is usual in universities, the learning is in equal parts derived from research and teaching. It is planned to equip the Rottweiler old high-school with organs that represent the most important points of the epochs of organ history (originals and replications of historic instruments, innovative new organs, positives, harmonien, cembali and hammerclaviere).

## **The organ projects of the institute**

At present, we are engaged in two interesting organ projects for ourselves and for the students. First, the documentation of the Schmahl-organ in the church of the castle at Ludwigsburg, Germany; the organ is the best preserved instrument by this organ-builder. Second, the documentation – and, later, the restoration and the copying of the Stein-organ at the Martin-Luther-church at Kihelkonna (Kielkond), Estonia; this organ-builder was born in Durlach, in the famous dynasty in southern Germany, and was the son-in-law of Heinrich Andreas Contius.

## **The time-table**

Two years ago, there was a lot to do, and now there is much more to be done. Both the delivery of the international Masters course, “OrganExpert”, and the establishment of the “institute of organ and church music” makes great demands on the partners in the network OrganExpert and the Musikhochschule Trossingen. In addition to teaching and research, we have to look for financial resources, too. But our goal is clear: the headquarters of the “institute of organ and church music” will be financed by Rottweil city and district; and the “OrganExpert” programme is to be included in the “master plan 2012” for the state of Baden-Württemberg.

In future, the “Institute of organ and church music” will acquire a workshop for organ-building, in order to be able to generate an income-stream and thus attain some economic autonomy, for instance by supporting organ projects across Europe (conservation, restoration, reconstruction, new builds). Then we will develop activities in the tourism sector (journeys for organ friends, organ interpretation courses etc).

These initiatives – the Masters degree “OrganExpert” and the “institute for organ and church music” – enjoy wide political support. On this basis, we have made a sound beginning.