

**Lecture given at the ISO Symposium
“How to win new friends for the pipe organ”
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by Johannes Skudlik

The trail of a European Organ Festival organised for the first time in 2005 led along the historic Roman road “Via Claudia Augusta”, and over 50 concerts by high-ranking performers brought sound to a region, whose scenic and cultural attraction served numerous performers as inexhaustible source of inspiration for centuries. Concerts in Landsberg, Augsburg and other cities led via the Alps towards Bolzano, Verona, Milan, Vicenza and Padua, and finally reached the lagoon city Venice. After a period of several weeks the festival ended here with a concert week.

Even in the first year, the European Organ Festival notched up an overwhelming success with over 10,000 spectators.

At the moment, the planning for the upcoming festival “Roads to Rome” 2008 is already underway. This festival – planned with the help of the EU – will be conducted in eight European nations, and will find its climax in the course of a festival week in Rome.

Participating cities – all characteristic in different ways for European history – are, amongst others, Santiago de Compostela, San Sebastián, Barcelona, Porto, Paris, Toulouse, London, Munich, Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Verona, Venice, Milan, Naples and Palermo. The festival is supported by the Vatican, where the final concert will also be held. The Bavarian Art Ministry has already promised a financial contribution in the run-up.

In addition to appearances by long-established stars of the international organ scene as well as high-calibre international orchestras, the 2008 festival – as also in 2005 – will enable the meeting with promising young talents, and will also provide a weighty contribution towards promotion of young artistic talent, not the least through a highly-paid organ interpretation competition (www.orgelstadt-landsberg.de) in September 2007.

Since time immemorial music has unfurled its effect beyond linguistic and national frontiers, reached the hearts of people and contributed towards peace and understanding.

It can do so all the more convincingly in the ambience of art-historical valuable religious buildings, which is why special attention is placed on the selection of performers and their programmes as well as the respective organs. The Church is the only institution which has developed a sophisticated music culture in a sustainable manner over the course of centuries. The pipe organ has been the Church’s genuine instrument for over a thousand years. The linkage of ancient pilgrimage trails, along which art-historically significant churches with high-quality instruments stand, will bring about a brisk cultural exchange amongst performers and listeners — a further mosaic piece in the overcoming of European frontiers!