

MEDIA INFORMATION

Exploring Hamburg in 2019: city of organ music

With more than 300 organs of all sizes and periods, Hamburg is one of the most important organ cities in the world. Hamburg has a documented history of 600 years of organ building, and here you can experience organ music live 365 days a year.

On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the death of Arp Schnitger, the renowned North German organ builder, Hamburg has put together a one-of-a-kind programme for 2019, with concerts, guided tours, exhibitions, competitions, and numerous other events.

When it comes to organ music and history, Hamburg has plenty to offer:

For example, a stroll through the city centre will lead you to the St. Jacobi Church, which is home to the largest preserved Arp Schnitger organ. And if you take a trip to the southern outskirts of Hamburg to the district of Neuenfelde, you will be able to visit Arp Schnitger's grave as well as his former workshop, which actually features another Schnitger organ that has been preserved in its original state.

A wealth of opportunities awaits you between the HafenCity and the Outer Alster Lake, between Harvestehude and the Elbphilharmonie – so why not embark on a musical journey through organ history from the 17th to the 21st century, with historic instruments, reconstructions as well as contemporary organs.

Hamburg's organs can be found e.g. in chapels, hospitals, concert halls, universities, private houses as well as the city's principal churches, and some are even hidden behind the thick walls of correctional facilities. And on the premises of the NDR broadcasting centre, a cinema organ brings back memories of the era of the silent movies.

Each organ allows insights into the history of the instrument and of organ music, telling stories about theology and technology, of aspiring citizens and self-confident farmers, of craftsmanship, the economy, success – and of course: stories about music. Without Northern Germany, and without Hamburg in particular, the evolution of organ music is hardly imaginable.

The city's great composers paid tribute to the organ, among them big names such as Georg Philipp Telemann, C.P.E. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, and Johannes Brahms – just like less renowned ones such as Heinrich Scheidemann, Johann Adam Reincken and, prior to them, Matthias Weckmann. In the Composers' Quarter in the immediate vicinity of St Michaelis Church, visitors can follow in the footsteps of famous Hamburg composers.

The Museum for Arts and Crafts Hamburg (MKG) will soon be dedicated to the world of organs too: from July 2019, the museum at the central railway station will be presenting the exhibition "Manufactory of Sound: 2000 years of organ building and organ playing", where visitors will be able to explore organ craftsmanship and music as an intangible UNESCO cultural heritage.

All of this goes to show that the organ is as fascinating as ever – and in the organ year of 2019 this fascination is going to experience a special peak, thanks to Hamburg's one-of-a-kind event programme.