



Trip to the Gewandhaus Orchestra Showcase, Leipzig, Germany, 25 November, 2010

## Summary

For our trip to Leipzig in November, we saw several buildings and very interesting tourist attractions in particular the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the BMW factory. I chose to make a trip report of the Gewandhaus Orchestra because I think it is the most interesting place I have seen in Leipzig. I love classical music & opera and that is why I naturally chose this topic.

The first Gewandhaus was built in 1781 by Johann Carl Friedrich Dauthe. The second opened on 11 December 1884 and was destroyed in the fire-bombings of World War II between 1943 and 1944. The third Gewandhaus on Augustusplatz opened on eight October 1981 and it is currently the home of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra.

## Gewandhaus history

The Gewandhaus was opened on Augustusplatz on 8 October 1981 and it provides excellent acoustic performance. The chief architect of the Gewandhaus Orchestra was Rudolf Skoda who worked in close cooperation with Kurt Masur, and then he became the Gewandhaus Music Director during the 57-month construction period.

The Great Hall, also called the Mendelssohn Hall, the foyers and the wonderful ceiling fresco together form a coherent ensemble. The three-level foyer is dominated by the colourful painting "Song of Life" by the Leipzig artist Sighard Gille. The area of this ceiling painting reach 712 sqm and making it the largest contemporary ceiling fresco in Europe.

## Technical aspect

The Great Hall, with an amphitheatre-style, presents seating for over 1,900 listeners. The centrepiece of the hall is a majestic organ with its 6,638 pipes. The organ bears an inscription with the Gewandhaus motto "RES SEVERA VERUM GAUDIUM" (True pleasure is a serious business). These words have accompanied the orchestra since it moved into its first concert hall in 1781.

Concert tickets are purchased in the Mendelssohn Foyer, with its larger-than-life sculpture of Mendelssohn by artist Jo Jastram. Until the end of 2003, Max Klinger's sculpture "Ludwig van Beethoven" was displayed here.

## Conclusion

The architecture and the beauty of the orchestra make this place unique. Moreover, it is surprising to enumerate the number of times the orchestra has been destroyed and rebuilt over the years. It is true that we would have liked to listen to a melody so as to appreciate the acoustic qualities of the orchestra. Maybe the next time...

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