

# **GREAT HISTORIC and MODERN ORGANS in FRANCE & SPAIN**

## **ORGAN TOUR 2010 : France – Spain with Christopher Hainsworth**

### **ITINERARY and DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME**

(Important note : although every attempt will be made to adhere to the programme as given below, all churches and organists associated with the tour reserve the right to make any last-minute changes brought about by circumstances which cannot be anticipated so far ahead – the most obvious examples being weddings and funerals as all church organists will know!)

#### **Day 1** (Tuesday 21 Sept)

People make their own arrangements to get to Paris in order to be at the rendez-vous in the hotel this afternoon.

15h00. Meet & Greet Paris session with tour leader Chris Hainsworth.

In the evening : Welcome Dinner

Hotel : PARIS

#### **Day 2** (Wednesday 22 Sept)

After breakfast we drive first to the small town of HOUDAN.

The organ is a very rare example of the work of Louis-Alexandre Clicquot, father of the more celebrated François-Henri.

Its construction dates from 1734, while its magnificent restoration remained completely faithful to the original, offering therefore a fascinating experience of organ technology and sound of well over 250 years ago. Constructed with three manuals and 21 stops, and a French-style pedal board which has no stops but being permanently coupled (as it were) to the great organ. One of the most important historic instruments capable of evoking today the authentic sound of the French baroque organ.

Then we drive into CHARTRES for lunch and time to visit the World Heritage cathedral and admire its celebrated stain glass windows, as well as to wander round the old town (containing some of the oldest houses in France!) – while those who are interested can visit the quite unique “Stained-glass Windows” museum close by the cathedral.

We then drive into ORLEANS, direct to the cathedral, to visit an organ in complete contrast to that of Houdan – the sumptuous, magnificent, grandiose 4 manual 54 stops Cavaillé-Coll built in 1880. (The *orgue de chœur* is also not without interest, a 2 manual Cavaillé-Coll dating from 1846).

Hotel : ORLEANS

### **Day 3** (Thursday 23 Sept)

Morning : something completely different : the new Aubertin organ in the Church of Saint Marceau – splendid to look at, splendid in sound – even if the tradition of organ sound to which it belongs is more closely related to German baroque organs than to French!

After the visit, time to have lunch and explore a bit around the centre of Orleans – the city was very badly damaged during the Second World War – there are statues of Joan of Arc to remind the visitor of her victory over the English and triumphant entry into Orleans in 1429 – as well as the Joan of Arc Centre and her (re-constructed!) House. Orleans is also the first major town on that part of the River Loire on its way to the Atlantic which was declared World Heritage a few years ago.

Mid afternoon – a 45 mins drive to the small town of LORRIS : a “royal town” from the 12<sup>th</sup> century as the Chateau de Salles (since disappeared) was a residence for the kings of France from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The fact that it was a royal town explains why at the very beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the church gained the right to install an organ. A first organ was built, of which the loft still remains, but the instrument itself was rebuilt a century later re-using some 200 of the original pipes. The Lorris organ is now considered one of the most historic organs in France, one of the rare examples of a major programme of organ-building in France at this time. It has a remarkable sound. It is the only instrument of its kind to have survived – as well as surviving the French Revolution! – completely restored in the 1970s (the restored instrument inaugurated by Marie-Claire Alain), now the centre of an organ festival each summer. There is also a museum devoted to the organ which helps to understand more of the history of the instrument.

Return to ORLEANS for the evening.

### **Day 4** (Friday 24 Sept)

Morning drive by motorway to visit one of the most celebrated of the Royal Châteaux on the Loire, that of BLOIS – its principal architectural features starting with Louis XII, followed by the superb Italian style façade and staircase of François I, through to the classical style of Mansart in the 1630s for Gaston d'Orleans (Blois was given to Gaston by his brother Louis XIII for various political reasons...). Blois is a wonderful experience for all lovers of history and architectural design and decoration!

After the visit, a relatively short drive brings us to the small town on the banks of the Loire and surrounded by vineyards of MONTLOUIS SUR LOIRE. Here there will be a *déjeuner campagnard* in the cellars of a local wine-grower. Presentation and tasting of the Loire valley wines of the Montlouis area before lunch!

After lunch : A short drive to one of the loveliest châteaux of them all : CHENONCEAU : time to wander round the chateau and gardens before going into the nearby “royal town” of AMBOISE for the evening.

After settling into hotel, free to explore – nothing organized in the evening. Take time to walk across the bridge spanning the River Loire – from which vantage point you can take magnificent photographs of the illuminated great Renaissance château.

Hotel AMBOISE

### **Day 5** (Saturday 25 Sept)

Morning : Drive along the Loire to the city of Tours, where Chris has proposed something a little out of the ordinary! A visit to what he describes as the “ultra-modern rather zany new instrument” in the Reformed Church (Temple) in Tours.

The small church itself was built at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, seats a maximum of 200 people, - and has exceptional acoustics! The new organ is the work of Alsatian organ builder Remy Mahler, whose inspiration is to be found in the researches for rich sonority characteristic of German organ builders in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. This instrument is made essentially with wood pipes, and is remarkable too for the total absence of any couplers.

After the visit, time to wander in the centre of the city and have lunch.

Early afternoon : we drive towards Poitiers stopping on the way to experience one of the cultural highlights of the tour : a visit to the World Heritage site of Saint Savin. The construction of the magnificent romanesque abbey church (almost the only building left of the original abbey) as we know it today was begun in the year 1100, but it is the decoration inside which takes the breath away! Wall paintings, murals, frescoes, all outstanding in quality, colour, beauty, offer perhaps the finest ensemble of Romanesque 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> century paintings anywhere. The ceiling along the length of the nave has been described as the equivalent of a “Romanesque Sixtine”! Even if you know Saint Savin already, if you have not seen it in the last two years, you are in for a wonderful surprise now that the restoration of the paintings has been completed.

Then drive into Poitiers for the evening.

Hotel : POITIERS

### **Day 6** (Sunday 26 Sept) and **Day 7** (Monday 27 Sept)

Poitiers – once a provincial Gallo-Roman capital, rich in 2000 years of history, a wonderful range of churches and châteaux mainly built between the 11<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, (but boasting the oldest Christian edifice in France, the *Baptistère Saint Jean* started in the 5<sup>th</sup> century) and very much a real university town! Indeed its university is one of the oldest in France (created in 1431), and was ranked second only to the Sorbonne in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (when it already had more than 4000 students). Among the most celebrated of past students figure Rabelais, Descartes, du Bellay, and

Francis Bacon! The two days in Poitiers will centre around an exploration of the historic city itself, and a discovery of as many of the five major organs as time allows – the programme of organ visits is in the hands of the Association of Poitiers Organists.

Most famous of the organs in Poitiers is undoubtedly the François-Henri Clicquot organ situated in the 12-13<sup>th</sup> century cathedral and built at the very end of Clicquot's life during the period 1787 - 1790 (indeed he died before the organ was completed, the finishing touches being the responsibility of his son Claude-François). The restoration carried out between 1988 and 1994 was extremely successful, so that with the exception of the pedals the organ is now as close as it is possible to come to the original instrument of 1790, thus making it one of the most rare and most authentic examples of the classic French organ of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the church of *Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand* (a St James Way World Heritage church) can be found the newly restored Wenner romantic organ of the late 1880s, while the church of *St Jean de Montierneuf* houses a modest Merklin instrument dating from 1866, a classified historic instrument which has recently been very successfully restored, enabling one to admire the "Merklin sound" belonging to the great period of his career.

In the church of *Sainte Radegonde*, one of the oldest churches in Poitiers (for if the nave is 13<sup>th</sup> century gothic, the choir is pure 11<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque!) houses the most recently built organ in the city – 4 manual 57 stops – the work of Boisseau & Cattiaux (best known for their organ restoration work – Notre Dame de Paris, Saint Sernin de Toulouse, Chapelle Royale de Versailles – and the Clicquot in Poitiers cathedral!) A magnificent instrument, infinite range of sound possibilities, the organ resounds in these superb acoustics as only a great organ can, yet capable too of the softest musical intimacies!

Last but not least the church of *Notre Dame la Grande* – another modern, more modest instrument inaugurated in 1996, the last major instrument built by Yves Sévère, and represents the culminating point of a life-time's search to produce the right musical sound according to the style of composition and the place of performance.

It is hoped that a lunch can be arranged in order to invite the organists participating in the visit to dine and discuss.

Mid-afternoon : by motorway to BORDEAUX

Hotel Day 6 : POITIERS

Hotel Day 7 : BORDEAUX

**Day 8** (Tuesday 28 Sept) (Coach-free day)

Morning : guided visit of the World Heritage historic centre of Bordeaux.

Perhaps most associated with wine the world over, Bordeaux has in fact a rich historical, cultural, and commercial heritage spreading over more than 2000 years. In terms of strictly architectural heritage the city (by no means one of France's largest) has more historically protected buildings

than any other in the country except for Paris. Bordeaux is especially renowned, however, for the development of its urban planning and architecture since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century : it stands as a magnificent example of unified planning and construction of the Age of Enlightenment recognised today in the classification of its port and city centre as a World Heritage site – an urban development which sustained its basic principles over some two centuries. (Incidentally, to be seen as much illuminated in the evening as during daytime!)

The rest of the day will be given over to two organ visits :

First one of the most famous organs in France, the Don Bédos de Celles instrument in the church of *Sainte Croix*.

The organ was built in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century : it was the most important built by Dom Bédos, author of the famous treaty on organ building : *L'Art du facteur d'Orgues* ("The Art of the Organ Builder"), published in 1766. A five-manual organ, restored by Quoirin in 1997, almost miraculously it still contains some 60% of the original pipes, the organ case, and the most important of the windchests.

A magnificent example of the French classical 18<sup>th</sup> century organ, the instrument attracts distinguished organists from the world over. The organ is also the centre of attraction for a summer organ festival as well as various international competitions – composition as well as interpretation.

By way of contrast the second visit is to the most important of the romantic symphonic organs in this entire region of France, the 52 stop Wenner organ dating from 1886 and also restored by Quoirin in 2005, to be found in the church of *Saint-Louis des Chartrons*. Frequently described as "sensational", this organ is considered by many to be Wenner's finest achievement.

If time permits after the visit, we hope to return to the centre of the city by visiting either the Basilica of *Saint Seurin*, the oldest church in Bordeaux (and a St James Way World Heritage church!), or the Basilica of *St Michel*, one of the finest examples of flamboyant gothic architecture in France!

Hotel : BORDEAUX

Day 9 (Wednesday 29 Sept)

An all-day excursion, returning to Bordeaux in the evening.

After breakfast, we drive to the small town of Montpon Menesterol, to visit the private collection of historic organs restored by Francis Chapelet. Chapelet, for 20 years organist at St Severin church in Paris, organ teacher in the Bordeaux Conservatoire, internationally renowned recitalist, whose most permanent passion is the study and restoration of Spanish historic organs.

The collection itself, which he began in 1975, is housed in what Chapelet has called the Auditorium San Francisco, while Montpon has become a centre for various musical activities (seminars, intensive courses, instrument making...)

After an organized lunch in Montpon, we drive a short distance to the site of the Benedictine Abbey of Guîtres, built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but of which only the church has survived. The decision was taken in the mid 1970s to build an organ for the church, following as far as possible the principles of organ building as exemplified in the work of Dom Bédos and François-Henri Clicquot.

Built by Beuchet-Debierre (in fact the last instrument they built) and inaugurated in 1986, with significant improvements more recently made by Hurvy, the organ of truly original quality, which impresses the visiting organist by its sound and innovatory aspects, is an excellent example of the inventiveness of French organ building in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century while remaining within an overall classical framework.

Hotel : BORDEAUX

## INTO SPAIN

### Preamble to the Spanish part of the tour.

Why Spain? Apart from the obvious contrasts with France – scenery, climate, gastronomy & wine, art and architecture, history, the mentality of the people – from our point of view Spain provides an excellent contrast with France in terms of organ building, design, technique – and decoration.

Nicolas James, in an article for OrganArt (Media) in 2007, helps provide the answer.

Spain, in fact, has more historic organs than any other country in Europe. What is recognized as a “lasting conservatism” among Spanish organ builders from the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries meant that while organs would be cleaned and repaired, almost none were substantially altered or rebuilt. The result is that those which have been restored particularly since the aftermath of the Civil War, offer an excellent understanding and appreciation of the instruments as they had been some two centuries earlier.

Generally much smaller than French 18<sup>th</sup> century instruments, invariably superbly decorated, more-often-than-not one manual instruments capable nevertheless of producing an “astonishing variety of sounds”. There are obvious visual differences, the sound is very distinctive, certain clearly defined technical differences which will be explained as we travel through. The “big sound”, associated with the French Romantic organs has no real equivalent in Spain – what big sounds you will hear will come more from the 20<sup>th</sup> organs to be visited!

### **Day 10** (Thursday 30 Sept)

After breakfast, we drive by motorway south through the Landes region of Aquitaine to the border with Spain and “round the corner” as it were into SAN SEBASTIAN.

Lunch, settle into hotel, relax for the rest of the day in one of the loveliest of all seaside resorts in Spain!

Hotel : SAN SEBASTIAN

**Day 11** (Friday 1 Oct)

A day of contrasts in the Basque country before we are introduced to the first series of historical organs.

On leaving San Sebastian, we drive along the Basque coast to the town of DEBA (its estuary and famous beach are great favourites with holiday makers), where we are invited to visit the most recent organ in Spain in the church of Santa Maria la Real – a 3 manual instrument by one of today's major organ builders, Barcelona-based Gerhardt Grenzing, and inaugurated on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2009 by the great French organist and composer Thierry Eschaich.

After this visit, we drive the short distance to the small town of AZCOITIA, where if all goes well, we visit one of the rare, yet considered one of the finest Cavallé-Coll organs in Spain, to be found in the church of Santa Maria La Real. It was among the last, if not the last organ built by the celebrated French organ builder, inaugurated in 1898. An opportunity for a recap of the famous French romantic/symphonic organ sound before hearing the first of the Spanish historic organs!

After the visit to Azcoitia, motorway all the way to the provincial capital of Palencia. which, if not one of the most beautiful regions of Spain, is nevertheless at the very centre of one of the richest regions in Spain for enthusiasts of the historical organ.

Hotel : PALENCIA

**Days 12, 13, 14** (Saturday, Sunday; Monday 2,3,4 Oct)

(**NB** : one of these days will be an obligatory coach-free day, so special local arrangements will be made)

It is here in Palencia that the group will be joined by Francis Chapelet (refer back to Day 10 if you don't know him), recognized as a world authority on the Spanish historic organ. His main field of activity in this respect has been the region of Palencia in the heart of the ancient kingdom of Castilla. Here is to be found the world's largest collection of historic organs, (re-)discovered by Chapelet in the 1970s where not one of the 90 historic organs was playable : thanks to his passion, initiative, and understanding of these instruments, some thirty have now been brought back to life, largely unchanged since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

We will be privileged to have Francis Chapelet accompany the group throughout their three-day stay in Palencia. The selection of instruments (he has 15 in mind!) will be from those for which restoration he has been responsible, ranging from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century : Francis is determined that the group will visit as many as possible so that they have a complete overview of the Spanish historic organ!

Among the 15 organs proposed for exploration by Francis Chapelet are included :

*Frechilla* – the organ case itself dating back to 1684, with pipework dating successively from 1691, 1730, and 1788, completely operational again in 1983 and as it had never been dismantled, the instrument remains essentially in its 1788 condition. The church acoustics are remarkable, the

overall organ sound quite remarkable, the registrations illustrating well the general concerns of organ building and sound research in Spain of the times.

*Amusco* – the organ here was built by the same firm as that responsible for Frechilla, and was the largest instrument built in the province of Palencia.

*Capillas* – a typical example of rural Castilian organ building, though you will find the sound quite different from the instrument in Frechilla. Perhaps more restoration was required for this instrument than in the case of Frechilla, but a sufficient number of pipes were recoverable to ensure that the modern replacements required were accurate replacements of the originals.

*Fuentes de Nava* – here there are two organs built by the same organ builder as in Camillas, a certain Tadeo Ortega, who is considered the last of the great organ builders of the region. His instruments have all been recognized for their exceptional mechanical and tonal qualities.

*Tamara de Campos* – magnificent as an instrument and from its actual spectacular positioning in the church!

*Parades de Nava* – another remarkable organ by Tadeo Ortega...

And so on through the villages of *Abarca, Castromocho, Autillo, Villalon, Santoya*....

Francis Chapelet makes the point that in most cases, the churches themselves are well worthy of a visit, independent of any interest in the organs, while the sheer beauty of the actual organ cases will invariably get the cameras clicking!

Hotel : PALENCIA

### **Day 15** (Tuesday 5 Oct )

After breakfast, we leave Palencia – after about an hour we reach the great city of BURGOS. Guided visit of one of the world's great cathedrals (World Heritage, obviously!) – after which, time to wander in the historic centre and have lunch before leaving by motorway for the famous religious, university and cultural city of ZARAGOZA.

Not one of Spain's most beautiful cities, largely rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Zaragoza, capital of the ancient kingdom of Aragon, is nevertheless full of history, both religious and military (during the Napoleonic siege of 1808-1809 the city lost some 50% of its population), and exceptionally the city boasts two cathedrals!

The programme in and around Zaragoza is in the hands of organ-builder, Frederic Desmottes, a Frenchman who with his brother established their workshop in Spain. The programme is designed to illustrate the fact that Spanish organ tradition, like any other, changes from region to region.

Hotel : ZARAGOZA

**Day 16** (Wednesday 6 Oct)

Included in the visit will be the cathedral *La Seo*, (one of the monuments listed as part of the World Heritage sites of *Mudejar Architecture of Aragon*, so worth visiting in its own right!) – the organ offers some remnants of the original instrument dating back to 1469, with much of the rest dating from the 16 – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In the church of San Pablo, the original instrument dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, subsequently reconstructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Not far from Zaragoza lies the small town of Daroca (originally Celt, then Roman, then Arab, finally Spanish!) : in the Basilica Santa Maria is to be found a superb historic organ restored by Quoirin, worth visiting if only to photograph the instrument! The gothic case dates from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the restoration has aimed to retain as much as possible of the instrument dating from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The organ itself has two manuals, with stops both for the “right hand” and the “left hand”...

Hotel : ZARAGOZA

**Day 17** (Thursday 7 Oct)

Morning drive to visit the workshops of organ builders Yan & Frédéric Desmottes in the village of Landete. Born in Normandy, childhood in Paris & the Jura, the brothers were attracted to the art of organ building and learned their skills respectively from two distinguished organ builders, Jean Daldosso and Pascal Quoirin. After working for organ builders in Madrid for a time, they decided to establish their own organ-building enterprise, first in Cuenca, then finally settling in the small village of Landete. They are responsible for the restoration of most of the historic organs in the region, but have also built several new and original instruments.

Visit, discussions, lunch!

In the late afternoon, we drive back to CUENCA.

Hotel : CUENCA

**Day 18** (Friday 8 Oct)

All day in CUENCA

The World Heritage town of Cuenca is one of the most remarkable places you can visit in Spain. Cuenca is an exceptionally-well preserved medieval walled city – standing on a hill – built originally by the Moors, subsequently conquered by the Castilians in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it became a royal town and bishopric, boasting Spain’s first gothic cathedral, and renowned especially for its “hanging houses” – suspended from the sheer cliff faces overlooking the river, and giving on to magnificent countryside. In the World Heritage citation, Cuenca is considered “a site of outstanding universal value as it is an exceptional example of the medieval fortress town that has preserved its

original townscape remarkably intact along with many excellent examples of religious and secular architecture from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries”.

There will be a guided visit of historic Cuenca itself, then of the cathedral, built at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but it has undergone many changes subsequently.

For the rest of the time, visit and exploration of the two baroque organs in the cathedral which have both been restored by the Desmottes brothers. Both were built in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Spanish organ builder Julian de la Ordan. According to Frederic Desmottes the two organs lend themselves well to two-organs/four-hands performances, and it is anticipated that Chris and Francis will oblige! It is also anticipated that the group will be accompanied on this visit by Frederic Desmottes so that the problems relating to the restoration of the characteristic sounds and mechanics of the Spanish baroque organ can be well discussed and illustrated.

Hotel : CUENCA

### **Day 19** (Saturday 9 Oct)

After breakfast, drive by motorway to the World Heritage city of Toledo. It seems a pity to be so close and not visit this wonderful place, impregnated with more than 2000 years of history, Roman, Visigothic, Jewish, Christian, Islamic : all these influences and peoples are part and parcel of the history of Toledo, and help understand the extraordinarily rich diversity of the old town. The great cathedral is like an immense treasure-trove – from the sumptuous, flamboyant retable, and the simply wonderful choir stalls dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, to the collection of El Greco paintings in the sacristy. The great painter was undoubtedly Toledo’s most famous citizen (he settled here in 1577 at the age of 36 and remained in Toledo until his death in 1614).

After the visit – by motorway into Madrid

Hotel : MADRID

### **Day 20** Sunday 10 Oct.

Morning free for people to organize their sight-seeing or visits as they wish. Those who do not know the city at all, will obviously wish to discover such famous parts as the Plaza Mayor, the Palacio Real or the Retiro Park, or visit one or other of the two great museums : the Prado and the Thyssen-Bornemisza...

Afternoon. If the tour started with small historic organs, we complete our three weeks together with a striking example of all that organ-building techniques at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can offer in all its glory and majesty by visiting the great four-manual 71 stop organ built by Grenzing for the vast cathedral of Madrid - *La Almudena* - the construction of which has spanned almost the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, consecrated finally by John-Paul II in 1993.

According to Grenzing, “the organ was conceived as a synthesis of the traditions of central European organ building at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while incorporating the richest and most

interesting contributions of the Iberian school which have been studied throughout the extensive restoration work we have carried out on many historical organs...Despite its size, the instrument is capable of great sensitivity musically". Brilliance, warmth, colour, clarity, transparency, generosity – these are all attributes used to describe what is undoubtedly one of the finest contemporary examples of the art of organ-building to be found in Spain, if not in Europe as a whole.

Evening : Farewell Dinner

Hotel : MADRID

### **Day 21 Monday 11 Oct : DEPARTURE**

NB : for those who wish to spend more time in Madrid, there will be no problem to extend the hotel for you.

### **FOR GENERAL INTEREST**

#### ***WORLD HERITAGE SITES & MONUMENTS FEATURING ON THIS TOUR***

Orleans	)
Blois	) WH sites of that part of the
Amboise	) River Loire Valley which is
Tours	) classified World Heritage
Mountlouis sur Loire	)
Saint Savin	Wall paintings
Saint Hilaire le Grand	Poitiers – St James Way (France)
Bordeaux	Historical Centre, Port de la Lune
Basilica Saint Seurin	Bordeaux, St James Way
Camino de Santiago	Many historical sites
Burgos	Cathedral
Zaragoza	Mudejar Architecture
Cuenca	Walled city
Toledo	Cathedral & historic centre